



# SANCTUS SPIRITUS AND COMPANY

EDWARD A. STEINER

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**SANCTUS SPIRITUS  
AND COMPANY**

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**EDWARD A. STEINER**



# SANCTUS SPIRITUS AND COMPANY

BY

EDWARD A. STEINER

Author of "The Immigrant Tide," "On the Trail of the  
Immigrant," "Against the Current," etc., etc.

NEW  YORK

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THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED TO  
A. A. HYDE  
WHO IN THE MOUNTAINS  
AND ON THE PLAINS  
IN BUSINESS AND PRIVATE LIFE  
WALKS WITH  
SANCTUS SPIRITUS AND COMPANY



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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	ON THE ESPLANADE . . . . .	11
II	YANEK ARRIVES . . . . .	21
III	ROSEMARY AND FEATHER BEDS . . . . .	30
IV	THE PAN'S DOMAIN . . . . .	39
V	PLUM BRANDY . . . . .	55
VI	LOVE ONE! . . . . .	64
VII	THE SCHOOLMASTER . . . . .	70
VIII	THE BEETERS . . . . .	80
IX	THE FIRST "SCHKANDAL" . . . . .	96
X	THE TRIAL . . . . .	106
XI	VAVRA'S BUTCHER SHOP . . . . .	115
XII	SUSANKA . . . . .	124
XIII	WHEN THE CAT SNEEZED . . . . .	137
XIV	THE CIRCUMCISION . . . . .	144
XV	SWEET STRYCHNINE . . . . .	152
XVI	THE RIOT . . . . .	161
XVII	MATER DOLOROSA . . . . .	173
XVIII	THE GOVERNMENT STRIKES . . . . .	181
XIX	WHEN THE SAW SINGS . . . . .	191
XX	THE MAGIC SENTENCE . . . . .	200
XXI	THE GREAT CATASTROPHE . . . . .	210
XXII	SPIRITUS MORTUUS . . . . .	221
XXIII	SANCTI EXITI . . . . .	227
XXIV	THE HARVEST HOME . . . . .	238
XXV	THE REVEREND JOHN HRUBY . . . . .	249

XXVI	PRONOUNCING PRZEMYSŁ . . .	261
XXVII	STEVE BURLY . . .	272
XXVIII	IDOLS OF CLAY . . .	283
XXIX	THE HATERS . . .	289
XXX	SONYA GOES HOME . . .	297
XXXI	THE ARMISTICE . . .	304
XXXII	SANCTUS SPITITUS AND COMPANY .	313



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**SANCTUS SPIRITUS AND COMPANY**



# SANCTUS SPIRITUS AND COMPANY

## CHAPTER ONE: ON THE *ESPLANADE*

"**S**HALL two men walk together unless they be agreed?" But, oh wise prophet of Israel, how about three men who, at a certain hour each day have walked together along the *Esplanade*, unless they were in the *Bashanyitza* pretending to shoot pheasants, or in Poestyan taking their exercise after the baths, or were sitting in the Casino playing *Clabriash*; and who never agreed upon anything, except that their rheumatism wasn't better, and that the times were growing worse—matters upon which most men agree when they are past middle age, and are walking toward the sunset.

The *Esplanade* where they walked, had little in common with the shaded avenues in the great cities of the old world, with their brilliant shops on either side, elegant equipages, beautiful ladies and flirting cavaliers. Unlike those wonderful boulevards which led from nowhere to nowhere and back again, the *Esplanade* where our three men walked, boasted only four rows of stunted acacia trees, two on each side of the dusty, rutty roadway, and a few wooden benches, upon which the lovers of many generations had carved their entwined initials, while Cupid was carving with his dart.

On one side were three plots of ground, separated from each other by high, spiked, iron fences. There, Roman Catholics, Protestants and Jews buried their

dead, when living and loving and esplanading were over and done. On the other side, a low chain of the Carpathian mountains rose above a faded, dusty picture which scarcely any one ever saw; for it had been there always; that was the *Esplanade*.

It could not have been either Saturday or Sunday when the three men walked together there; for on Saturday, Moritz Redlich, the distiller of the famous Hungarian *slivovitz* went to the synagogue, and on Sunday, the Reverend Father Anton Kalman stood before the altar where he had officiated since the tonsure had been applied to his head. On the same day Pan Yan Szenitzky went to his church and stood up before the Lord in the full consciousness of the Divine sovereignty and of his own; for he was a Calvinist, and subscribed to the Helvetian confession of faith.

As I have said, the three men did not agree upon anything except their rheumatism and the degenerate times, but these subjects are big, and were especially so to those three, as they were indeed the survivors of a good time when in that corner of the wide world, Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, Slav, German and Magyar had lived together amicably, undisturbed by the religious and nationalistic struggles which were convulsing the people of that unfortunate, Austro-Hungarian monarchy of which their village was a part. They were the survivors of a time when educated men talked Latin together, because they could not agree upon any one of the current tongues. Indeed when the three met each other it was with "*Servus, Amice*" that they sealed their handshake, and not with the Magyar "*Ala Szolgayo*," then becoming current and almost mandatory.

So they had met on a certain Wednesday at five o'clock in the afternoon, in time to walk out to the railroad to see the two trains come in and have a glimpse of the

*Bashanyitza*; to complain because the trains were frightening the birds away and carrying the peasants to America, thus making wages high and morals low. They argued about sugar beets versus potatoes, Magyars versus Slovaks, Gendarmes versus Pandures, and sulphur baths versus Hunyadi water for rheumatism.

The Reverend Father Anton Kalman, tall, thin and not too saintly to be human, was as near an ascetic as one could be in a country where wine was good, women handsome, and meat plentiful. Robed in his satin *sutan*, he frequently drew out of its folds his snuff tobacco box. Its lid bore a picture of the Christ with the bleeding heart, and he never offered that box to Moritz Redlich, the gnarled, almost humpbacked, bronchial old Jew, whom he had known since they were boys together, and loved as if he were his own brother. For him he had another box, adorned with the picture of a beautiful young woman, of that mythological period when dress was not used to suggest what it affected to conceal.

Pan Yan Szenitzky did not use snuff; he smoked a long stemmed, porcelain pipe, known as a *Dresdenska*, imported from Germany. It was the apple of his eye and of his nose too, for it was an article of his religious faith that his pipe must be as sweet and clean as he knew his life was. He wore leather breeches which, together with the satin *sutan* of His Reverence, and the persistent cough of the Jew, made their walk so audible that even in the dark, their fellow promenaders in the *Esplanade* would say: "There go Sanctus Spiritus and Company," as they were known collectively, in this town of Hraszova in the district of Nyitra in the country of Hungary, way up in the north, where the Slovaks were in the majority, where the Magyars were the governing minority, and where the Jews were supposed to rule by virtue of their superior wits and their wealth.



Sanctus Spiritus and Company had good reason that Wednesday to agree that the times were growing worse, although for each of them in a different way. Father Kalman had just lost his Helenka. How should a priest, and an old priest at that, know when Helenkas became Helens? She had always been Helenka, ever since his sister's death, and he would not let the little thing be taken to an orphan asylum. So she stayed at the parsonage with an old crabbed housekeeper to scold her; but he made up for it by cuddling and spoiling her. "Anyway, it was better for her than being with a dozen hooded and starched Sisters," he said and he was right about it. He could be as good a father as the Sisters could be mothers. Suddenly he realized that his niece was no more Helenka and that was one reason the world was growing worse. Of course it was through the young curate that it dawned upon him that Helenka had become Helen, and he had just returned from Trnava, where he had left her with the Sisters. The curate was of the new school, with more faith in Hungary and love for the Hungarians than for the souls of men and the Kingdom of God. His first article of faith was, that the Magyar language must be spoken wherever the Hungarian flag waved, and that all other current tongues must be silenced, and silenced forever. He hated the Slovaks, sniffed disgustedly when one of the sheepskin-coated peasants came near him, and used more incense in one day than the priest ever had used in a month. He not only said mass in a foreign tongue, which of course was proper; he also preached in Magyar, and not more than a dozen people could understand what he said, which was just as well, for he said little or nothing about the way to Heaven, and much about *Magyar Orszag*, the kingdom of Hungary, and the sin of calling their King the Emperor; for the Emperor was an Austrian and the

King was an Hungarian, though they were one person, a duality as difficult to explain to the lay mind as the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The only other sin he condemned as eloquently was the sin of unchastity. He had his good points, the new curate, the Reverend Imre Baczko; he was a forceful preacher, and having been born a Slovak and become Magyarized, he was a more than zealous patriot. The young Magyar officials with their wives and sweethearts began coming to church, a duty they had neglected under the somewhat prosaic but faithful ministry of their old priest.

The curate was good-looking, which was not always an asset in his holy calling, and some of the knowing ones wondered how he could escape the snare of the devil in that place, where the mixture of Slav and Magyar, German, Jewish and Gypsy blood, had created a ravishingly beautiful feminine type, and among both, men and women, a disregard for one of the ten commandments upon whose trespass The Church has laid severest punishment. It was well for him that his superior had not only kept his vows inviolate, but at the same time knew the temptations of the flesh so well, that his judgment was always charitable and his corrections tempered by grace and mercy.

It was the shrewd Jew who, when he heard how violently the new curate was preaching against the sin of unchastity, suggested that the holy man might need watching. "Anton," he said, for he called the priest by his first name inside the circle of Sanctus Spiritus and Company, "a man always preaches hardest against his own besetting sin until the sin overtakes him; then he puts on the soft pedal," and alas! the time came when the curate touched upon that particular sin very lightly.

Moritz Redlich, who was the Spiritus of the rare group

walking along the *Esplanade*, had earned his nickname because he was the distiller of excellent plum brandy. However, he deserved the title for other reasons. Indeed, that little, gnarled, bronchial Jew was more Spiritus than Corpus. He inherited from his race a keen, spiritual discernment, which never degenerated into mere Jewish shrewdness, and, being able to see what most people did not or could not, he began bearing the burdens of others while he was yet a mere boy. Family burdens first; for he was the oldest of five children, and just past his thirteenth birthday and received into the full membership of the synagogue when his father died. As soon as the week of mourning was over and he had risen from the earthen floor and shaken off the sackcloth and ashes, he went out into the villages and bought plums as his father had bought them, and made just as good *slivovitz*, and left it just as unadulterated, and sold it in the same earthen jugs and made the same modest profit. The four younger children, three boys and one girl, never missed their father, except as they were held less strictly to the daily religious observances, which did not make them sad. In fact Moritz began spoiling them, by indulging "the poor orphans." He never came home from his frequent journeys without some present which he had bought by denying himself necessities.

The mother, a very sweet and pious woman, he adored as he would have a saint, had he been a Roman Catholic; and she rested herself upon him as if he were a man, not realizing that his burdens were too heavy for his years. He helped her through her widowhood so that she scarcely missed the strong arm of her husband, and she died, leaning upon him, content to know that the business was safe, as were the children. The boys had to be educated and the girl married, after a good dowry was provided.



As the mother had learned to depend upon Moritz, so had her children, and so had the poor Jews of Hraszova. When the poor Christians discovered his capacity for burden bearing they did the same thing, and when the president of the synagogue died, the honor and burden became his; when the boys developed into "ne'er-do-weels" and were expelled one by one from the *Gymnasium* in Nyitra, he sent them to America, and set them up in business; and when they failed, they quite naturally expected him to reestablish them. But he had married and had burdens of his own.

He was early besieged by marriage brokers, for he was a desirable match, the most desirable in the whole district, was rated as being worth a dowry of some ten thousand florins, and might have commanded twice as much, had he been merely a shrewd Jew; but he chose to marry a girl from a pious family, whose only asset was her father's Talmudic learning and spotless reputation. Three children were born to them, and then his wife faded away, her life blighted by consumption, a by-product of her father's sedentary habits and his piety. Moritz' friends urged him to marry again on account of the children. He considered the matter carefully, and decided to take their advice, and that was one of the many reasons for his agreeing with the other members of Sanctus Spiritus and Company, that the times were growing worse, as they walked along the *Esplanade* toward the railroad station.

Pan Yan Szenitzky, strong, upstanding Calvinist, owner of a thousand acres of land, a widower, father of two beautiful daughters, had only one grievance against the times, and the root of it was beets, sugar beets, which made of agriculture a business and not a gentleman's pastime, causing the peasants to sell their small holdings to the Sugar Trust, go to America, and come back from

there with strange notions of eating meat three times a day instead of twice a month, getting drunk quicker, staying drunk longer, making wages high and morals low. These were the only reasons that the world was growing worse for Pan Yan Szenitzky.

He had good cause to agree with his confrères upon the sad state of the times, for as they were walking along, his leather breeches saying swash, the priest's satin *sutan* saying swish, and Moritz Redlich coughing at every step—they heard above the noise they were making, the marching of men and women, and turning, saw a cloud of dust filling the *Esplanade*, while out of it rose a plaintive chorus, the women leading and the men a note or so behind, a sad undertone to the shrill feminine voices.

What were they singing about, these marching men and women? They sang of the bleak mountains which hemmed in their valley, of cornflowers and poppy seeds, of passionate love and deep sorrow; verse after verse, and song after song. The Slovak songs, always plaintive, had in them a new pathos as if the singers knew that while they were marching away to a land where they would have more and better bread, meat three times a day, drinks without stint, and good clothes—yet a land in which they would not sing at their labor.

So they sang as they marched, until they overtook Sanctus Spiritus and Company. Then they stopped, and the elder of the village from which they came fell upon his knees before the Reverend Father Anton Kalman, kissed his hand and the cross which hung from the satin *sutan*, then craved the priest's blessing for his people.

They helped him up on to one of the four benches which graced the *Esplanade*, and he looked into a sea of faces; young men's faces, young women's faces; and he lifted his hand and blessed them, saying nothing

besides, nor was there anything necessary to be said. They understood, though the blessing was in a foreign tongue. The quality of his voice, the tenderness of heart it betrayed, interpreted its meaning. So they all stood for a moment reverently, in perfect silence, and the women began to weep, and the men held back the tears. Then as if to drive away the sorrow, they sang again as they began to march, and this time they sang loudly, lustily, of red wine and beautiful maidens with black eyes, until they reached the railroad station.

Sanctus Spiritus and Company were following, unconsciously keeping step with the marchers and their merry tune.

The signal bells at the station were ringing incessantly, the station master was scurrying about, worried and worrying everybody; in the far distance the penetrating whistle and the slow chug of a train were heard.

The marchers had stopped their singing; for they were being crowded into the small third class waiting room, built at a time when no one dreamed that a hundred or more passengers would ever board the train at one time. Their bundles and feather beds, their jugs of *slivovitz*, and their tickets so engaged their attention, that without their being aware of it the train had slipped into the station and the gates were opened. When they entered the car they began to sing again.

"The times are growing worse," said Pan Yan Szenitzky, and he thought of sugar beets and high wages and low morals coming from America. The Reverend Anton Kalman was thinking of Helenka and the curate, and Moritz Redlich echoed: "The times are growing worse."

Then another whistle was heard; it was the train coming from the other direction, and if Pan Yan Szenitzky could have had as much vision as Moritz

Redlich, and could have seen and foreseen what indeed he could not foresee, he would have said again and again: "The times are growing worse"; but he would not have been thinking of sugar beets and high wages and lower morals, but of something entirely different.



## CHAPTER TWO: YANEK ARRIVES

“**W**HAT flows in must flow out again,” Thomas Czerveny the worst of the town drunkards used to say, when the fiery *palenka* served him by the Jewish tavern keeper did not flow freely enough out of the narrow necked bottle. That was also true of the flow of population to the United States. The immigrants came out of America again, but greatly diminished and altered, and changing everything around them slowly but surely, for better, for worse, according to how one looked at things and from what vantage ground. The landed gentry, among them Pan Yan Szenitzky, said they were a pack of rascals, socialists, anarchists and good for nothings, unsettling everything. So also said the Reverend Imre Baczko, and all the Magyar officials; not because they made wages high and worked when and as they pleased, but because they came back conscious of nationality and of the age-old wrongs practiced against them by their half Asiatic conquerors.

They brought home Slovak books and newspapers, and read them to their unlettered neighbors. Revolutionary songs were heard at the inn, there was less “kowtowing” before the nobility, much kicking against the goads, and the Magyar gendarmes justified their existence by using the butts of their guns and sometimes the points of their bayonets.

The crowd which had watched the departure of the emigrants waited to see who was coming back from America, and at the edge of it stood Sanctus Spiritus and Company, no less curious than the rabble. Lindner’s omnibus and his rival’s *fiacre*, a more pretentious looking

vehicle, sure of profitable fares, had jockeyed for position nearest the exit, and their owners were quarreling and calling down the curses of Heaven upon one another.

Two coaches had drawn up and waited at the gate reserved for first and second class passengers. Their drivers did not quarrel or speak to each other, or deign even to look about, and if their immobile faces reflected anything, it was contempt. Contempt for the third class crowd, the shabby looking omnibus, the pretentious *fiacre*, and for each other's master and horses.

What could there be in common between those two? Andrew Feher, Magyar horseman, cradled by the winds of the *puszta*, nourished upon huge portions of *gulyash*, serving his time in the sixth Hussar regiment, and attired in a gorgeous livery of so much braid and brass and silver buttons, that the red cloth of his wide sleeved coat and tightly fitting trousers scarcely showed.

What could there be in common between him and the Slovak, Stephan Hruby, driver of the heavy, arklike, drab looking coach, swinging upon huge old fashioned springs, and drawn by sedate looking roan mares, which at any time might be hitched to a plow or a hay wagon, and not feel insulted. Stephan Hruby, nearly sixty years of age, was born in a room adjoining Pan Yan Szenitzky's stable, brought up in that same room, curried the Pan's horses while yet a little boy, and drove them when he was not more than fifteen years old. He married the delicate, blond, strangely sweet looking housemaid Elzabetha, began housekeeping in those same rooms, begat children and shared all Pan Yan Szenitzky's prejudices, cursing at sugar beets and emigration, and standing up before the Lord on Sunday in the pride of the same Genevan faith.

His children played with the Pan's children, and his little Yanek, the apple of his eye, "smart as a whip and

good as gold," his Yanek was coming back to-day from America, and coming back, not as a coal miner, eaten up by gases, parched by the hot furnaces, cursing in a foreign tongue, drinking like a fish and eating like a glutton; he was coming back a gentleman, and more than a gentleman; a scholar, and more than a scholar; and he whispered it with a holy awe: he was coming back a minister of the Gospel! No wonder the old man looked proudly contemptuous.

Yes, Yanek went away like the others, a little younger than most, fifteen years of age; he went where the others went, to Pennsylvania, to Braddock.

For a long time it was the same story they read in his letters, the story of hard labor and strange ways, of big buildings, swift trains and strikes. Then the letters had a new content. Yanek was going to a normal school, and he wrote of American friends who were paying his expenses, of the school building and the women teachers who befriended him; of the new world which was opened to him in books. Then came a letter of eight pages upon which he did not put enough postage and which cost ever so much money to get from the postman, in which he talked about nothing but religion. It was strange reading even for so religious a man as Stephan Hruby, who had accepted his salvation as a matter of Divine decree, and looked up much to God as his sovereign; but never looked much into his own soul, and hardly even thought about his sins or his need of any kind of religious experience.

Yanek had "got religion." "As if he had not always had religion!" his mother cried. He had repented of all his sins, and as he had asked God's forgiveness he asked his parents' pardon. He recalled the trifling sins of his youth, the breaking of a window and not telling about it when he was playing *pleshka*; "as if his



father had not known and forgiven long ago!" Then most foolish of all things, he asked his father to see Christina, Pan Yan Szenitzky's older daughter, and ask her forgiveness for telling her one time that the cherries she was eating were wormy, and, when she threw them away, he had picked them up and eaten them himself. It was a big lie, the cherries were not wormy.

Christina laughed when she read that part of the letter and said: "the foolish boy!" When he added that there was another sin for which she must pardon him, that it happened when they were up in the pigeon loft looking at the nests, she blushed and felt that it was on the very place where he had kissed her cheek. "Children will be children," said Stephan Hruby smilingly; "but alas, they do not remain children."

What was there indeed, in common between him and the Magyar, Andrew Feher, a rascally old bachelor who ate raw bacon with *paprika* an inch thick, and was always drinking and always in trouble with women; and whom he was serving? Moritz Redlich a Jew! The Jew was well enough, the best of the tribe; he never drove in that carriage anyway. It was his wife's, a buxom Oriental beauty. Stephan despised Madam Amalie Redlich, who aped everything the aristocratic Gentiles did, who powdered and painted her face, and flirted with the young bloods. She was the occupant of the carriage, with her husband's daughter Sophie, who had come to see the trains arrive and depart.

Moritz Redlich coughed more than usual, a sharper, more nervous cough, and while he said nothing, the priest knew that it was his way of saying: "Ah, yes, the world is growing worse." He was thinking of Gittele, his first wife, with her hair modestly covered, as befits a virtuous Jewish woman, her black silk Sabbath dress setting off her beautiful pale face, which sug-



gested nothing but devotion to him and her children, and her austere and far away God.

He glanced bitterly at this woman, dressing only to show her form and conceal her age, flirting with the young officials who had gathered around her carriage, kissing her hand and paying her compliments; and afterwards making jokes at her expense, and mocking her speech. Worst of all, she used his Sophie, the youngest of Gittele's children as a sort of foil, taking her with her "God knows where."

Kukulish, the pock-marked postmaster, was holding his wife's hand, which, when she heard her husband's nervous cough, she guiltily withdrew.

Father Anton Kalman was using more snuff than usual; his curate had joined the gay cavaliers, and for a man who was preaching so earnestly against a certain sin, he seemed dangerously frivolous. When Father Kalman took snuff, he generally tapped the box three times, a form of benediction in the name of the Holy Trinity. Now he tapped only once, which was his way of being profane, and somewhere in his inner consciousness he was saying: "In the devil's name why does that curate of mine look that way at this Jewish woman?" Then he sneezed.

Pan Yan Szenitzky had just cleaned his *Dresdenska* and refilled it. In trying to light it he spoiled an unusual number of matches on his leather breeches, for he was wondering why his carriage was at the station. It was rarely seen there unless a member of the family was leaving home or guests were expected.

"No, *Pane Velcomoshni*," Stephan replied to his question, "no one is coming, no one but my own Yanek, coming back from America, and the young ladies told me I might bring him home in your honor's carriage. Of course you know, *Pane Velcomoshni*, he is a minister and

we couldn't let a minister walk. The old woman is here too, she is there by the gate packed in like the old sardine she is. She will sit here with me on the box and not with His Reverence in the carriage."

Pan Yan Szenitzky finally succeeded in lighting his pipe. Inwardly he was displeased at the thought of his coachman's son sitting in his carriage; the little, bare-footed, linen trousered, towheaded, Slovak boy who had played with his children. Of course, now he was a minister, and mustn't walk, and certainly must not sit in the driver's seat.

The signal bells continued their nervous ringing, the station master scolded the crowd for one thing and another. "Haven't these stupid Slovaks sense enough not to go so near to the tracks? Don't they know any better than to encroach so seriously upon the space reserved for their superiors? They are getting too forward since their kin have begun coming back with money, from America."

At last the train pulled into the station, the compartment doors were thrown open and the passengers alighted. The third class passengers were not crowded like cattle into the rear coach as of old, and did not wear badly smelling sheepskin coats, or carry huge bundles, or walk as if the world were made for their betters, and they permitted to live in it only by grace of the Hungarian Government. They jumped out of the cars in nervous haste. The men wore the sober garb of modern civilization, the women were overdressed, and the children were noisy and forward. They looked with contempt at the tiny engine, the toy cars and the officious station master. There was much hugging and kissing when they had passed through the gate, but in a shy and reserved way by the returned travelers, and while their friends who met them cried for joy, they who had come from America

shed no tears; neither did they sing as they did when from this same station they went away, "God knows how many years ago."

It was not easy to recognize one another. The world moves, people grow older, and alas! America changes them, makes them something else, something entirely different from the docile, simple folk who followed her beckoning and lived with her these many years.

At last all found their friends, and Lindner's omnibus and his rival's *fiacre* were loaded with passengers and their heavy leather suitcases and brassbound trunks; yet an old, wrinkled, Slovak woman stood upon the platform waiting for her Yanek. She had looked into every face, and in none did she see her boy. How could she imagine that this was her Yanek, her little boy, this young gentleman in a dark gray suit and a soft black hat, this broad shouldered, deep chested, young man with the kindly face and the laughing brown eyes? Naturally she was not expecting her little towsle headed boy of fifteen. She knew how many long and bitter years had passed since he had left her, how many nights almost; for when she went to bed her last thought was of him, and when she woke, and she woke so many times, his face was the first to emerge from her dreams. Of course he had sent them his picture, the last time was when he graduated from college, but it did not seem like her boy, this spectacled, scholarly looking youth. Yes, the nose looked familiar, and the shape of the lips; all else seemed changed, and when she thought of her Yanek, she never thought of him as that somewhat stiff looking, earnest, almost austere young man, but as her fifteen year old boy, whom she had kissed good-by on that same platform so many years ago.

He expected to see the mother of about forty years, whom he had left, with her oval face still fresh, and



framed by her beautiful lace cap. There would be a few wrinkles, they age so quickly these hard working, Slovak women; but this could not be his mother, this old, bent woman, her wrinkled, parchment like face, turning anxiously in every direction. Yet they recognized each other, though he did not wear a round collar as she expected, and though he did carry his heavy suitcase, which he should not have carried, being a gentleman and a minister. "*Muy Sinek!*" she cried as he clasped her to his heart.

"*Moya Mamushka!*" he said a dozen times, as he stroked her face and tried to wipe away her tears. Then he heard the snapping of a whip, loud, like the crack of a pistol, and there sat his father on the coachman's box, wearing the same livery and the same little, greasy, round hat with a peacock's feather. The same ticket puncher stood at the gate, and the same station master, older and more crabbed, bustled about. He pushed by them without a greeting in his haste to be with his father, and mounting the box, gave him a hug that left the old man breathless. It seemed as if the horses knew that their driver was supremely happy, for they whinnied and kicked up their heels as they had not for a long time.

"*Mamushka*, I will sit by father and you sit in the carriage."

"No, no, of course not; who ever heard of a minister riding with the coachman, and a poor old woman sitting in the carriage?"

But he lifted her in and sat her down, then climbed up on to the box, looked eagerly about, and seeing the familiar church towers in the distance, the four rows of acacia trees on the *Esplanade*, and the faded Carpathians, knew that he was home again; although the towers looked smaller and the *Esplanade* meaner, and the Carpathians not nearly so lofty. What assured him that

it was not a dream, was the sound of a familiar, nervous cough accompanied by the swish of a satin *sutan* and the swash of leather breeches, and when he saw the well remembered group he said to his father; "Sanctus Spiritus and Company are still walking together." "Yes," was the reply, "they are still walking together, but it can't last very much longer."

As they drove off, they passed Madam Redlich's carriage, and Andrew Feher the coachman looked contemptuously at the Pan's carriage and at its driver; but one end of his waxed mustache was lifted in a supercilious smile, as he saw the old Slovak woman seated inside, and he muttered, "*Tot Ember Nem Ember*," the Slovak is not a human being (a very familiar by-word among his kind) "even if his son does come back from America dressed in citizen's clothes." But the Madam looked smilingly into the face of this new type of gentleman, seated on the coachman's box. He lifted his hat and couldn't believe that it was the Madam, she had remained so young. When his father told him that the young lady with her was the little Sophie, his mind leaped back to the day when a black-eyed little Jewess came to school with her eyes swollen from weeping, for it was the day after her mother's funeral. Gathering all his courage he had walked up to the girl's side, to the very front of the classroom, and given her his new pen to comfort her. She smiled at him in gratitude, and he had never forgotten the smile; but strange to say, Christina, the Pan's daughter, wouldn't speak to him for a week after that episode, and now he began wondering why.

### CHAPTER THREE: ROSEMARY AND FEATHER BEDS

"IT isn't the three thousand miles you have traveled," the schoolmaster wrote to Yanek shortly after he had entered college; "it is the way you are living over there in America, which will carry you millions of leagues away from your people."

He was thinking about it as he lay there in the same stuffy *isba* in which he was born, on the same feather bed on which his mother bore him in unrelieved pain. He had hardly drawn a full breath the whole night, for the windows were tightly closed. He was kept awake by his father's harsh breathing, by the odor of the huge, round, sour loaves of rye bread which were stacked between the rafters of the low room, by the horses tugging at the halters in the stable adjoining, and by the angry barking of Sultan the watchdog, a playful puppy, when he left home.

Many and many a time he had cried himself to sleep over in America, longing to be again in this same room with its bedstead in the center, piled high with huge feather beds and unwieldy pillows, the pride of his mother's heart; the bake oven in the corner, the childrens' playground and their bed. To-night it was occupied by his parents, for his mother insisted that her minister son must not sleep there. How often had he visualized the gayly decorated earthen ware, the huge soup bowl, the red pots and wooden spoons on the crudely carved shelf. The smoky rafters which used to seem so high above him, now were so near that he knocked his head

against them as he tossed about, wishing himself back in the college dormitory, with its fresh air blowing through the open windows, and the nodding elms with their smooth, strong and graceful branches, whispering to him the hopes and aspirations of those brave, far seeing Puritans who had planted them, and who now seemed to him nearer than his own flesh and blood, from whom indeed he had traveled "millions of leagues."

"*Sinku muy*" his mother asked him, singing the words more than speaking them, making three syllables out of the word for son, though it had only two; "why don't you sleep?" Her heart was heavy from the same thoughts as his.

"For gladness," he replied, and leaving his bed he climbed up on the bake oven to her side, but while he held her in his arms, he knew he had not told her the truth; for he had traveled far even from her, the mother who was everything to him. He knew it by his recoil at the touch of her coarse flax shirt, and the hard crooked fingers which held his as in a vise; by his shrinking from contact with the parchment like, wrinkled cheeks he kissed, and the very breath of her lips as they sought his.

If he had traveled far from her, how much farther he had gone from his father who was tossing and groaning in his alcoholic sleep, gnashing his teeth, and muttering curses against Andrew Feher and the whole miserable crew which had taunted him about his proud son who would not go with him to the inn.

His mother with her far seeing eyes had divined it all before he came home. She knew it as soon as those letters came from the college, the letters which *Mlada Panka* Christina read to her and insisted upon keeping. She tried to lessen the distance by borrowing fine linen sheets from *Mlada Panka* Christina, who put rosemary between the feather beds "because rosemary smells of



home." And did she not herself buy new cotton ticking to cover the feather beds, finely striped ticking such as the nobility used? And did she not scrub the house from the rafters to the floor, and take the old sheepskin coats which smelled so badly, and put them into the woodshed?

She was chiding herself because she had not thought to buy Yanek a plate of white china; for she noticed at supper how embarrassed he was when he dipped his spoon into the common bowl, and how he spilled most of the food on the way to his only half opened lips. He scarcely touched the veal *Petchenka* she had prepared with so much care, and which his father crunched with such audible delight. She asked him then, why he did not eat, and he had said the same thing; "for gladness, *Mamushka*." Of course, her husband should not have asked him to go to the inn with him to celebrate his return.

How angry the old man was when he declined to go. He felt himself cheated out of the great joy of showing off his son before Andrew Feher, the Magyar coachman, who always taunted the returned immigrants and told them they were good for nothing but to do the Americans' hard and dirty work. Stephan wanted to show him what his son had become over in America, and he was going to take him into the extra room, where the town dignitaries sat, and drink sweet wine though it was not a holy day. He would show those proud, fat bellied merchants, who never permitted a sheepskin coated Slovak to enter that extra room, that a peasant's son could become a gentleman if he had a chance.

Of course he did not understand what his son was talking about, when he said he did not drink alcohol because it took away a man's health and reason, and that it was alcohol which had made the Jewish tavern keepers



rich, and had kept the Slovaks poor, and the patient subjects of their Magyar over lords.

"Listen to little Yanek. He needn't try to teach his father, even though he is a minister. *Palenka ye sila*," whisky is strength, Stephan retorted. "Could he not lift a three bushel bag of wheat as he always had done? Let his son try it, his reverend son, who did not drink *palenka*." Then he banged the door and went off alone to the inn, to celebrate his son's return as every father had a right to, when his boy came back from over the seas.

It wasn't so much of a success, this one sided celebration. Of course, they refused to serve him in the extra room, though he ordered wine as if it were the first day of Easter, and when he came out and sat down with the common herd, Andrew Feher was there to taunt him. There he was, fiercely mustached Magyar, eating raw bacon with *paprika* an inch thick, and washing it down with fine, sweet wine. When he had wiped his long mustaches and twirled them back into a needle point, he began to ask whether Stephan's old horses were not yet ready for the horse meat market in Budapest, and where his reverend son was. "No wonder he did not want to go to the inn with his Slovak father."

Yanek's mother was as restless that night as he was. She realized how far her little boy had traveled away from her when she saw him looking for a corner, where unobserved he might prepare for bed. He went behind the bake oven, where many a time as a boy he had hidden himself, and from her corner she watched him undress. Not even the Pan himself, no not even the *Foe Ispan* whose clothes she once washed when he was a guest at the Pan's house, had such underwear of fine wool, so closely fitting that it needed no strings to hold it to his body. He put on a soft, silky suit, such as

she had never seen, and then he took from his suitcase, white handled brushes and delicate instruments of steel, such as she had seen the watchmaker use, and when he had washed himself he cleaned his finger nails as if he were going to a ball given by the nobility.

She felt ashamed to undress herself before him, and went out into the dark kitchen, where she gargled her mouth so loudly that her son must hear her. She took down her hair as if it were Sunday, and put on a clean flax shirt, the best she had. When her husband came home drunk, she felt humiliated and was offended at the foulness of his breath. She did not respond to his coarse caresses, and put her hand over his mouth when he swore at her, and asked whether his reverend son had weaned his wife from him.

She knew that Yanek was not sleeping; she could hear him toss about, and again she asked: "*Sinku muy*, why don't you sleep?" And he made believe he was asleep, and did not answer her.

"*Yanetchku*, my golden boy, do you know that our Katchka has had another baby?" Still there was no answer.

"*Yanetchku muy*, is it true that in America the women do not work, but sit all day long in their rocking chairs and eat candy?"

Then he betrayed himself. "No, motherkin, who told you such nonsense?"

"The new *Fräulein* who has been in America, and teaches all the *Mlada Pankas* how to sing. Such funny singing, sonny; she makes their voices climb up and then down again, and it sounds as if they were in pain. Old Sultan does not like the *Fräulein*. He begins to howl when he sees her coming, and when she sings he howls the more and she grows very angry."

Again there was a long silence.

"I don't like the new Fräulein either," his mother began again. "She says the American men have no manners, that they chew tobacco and spit it around as if they were in a pig sty."

"Oh, motherkin, that isn't so either; now go to sleep, dearest."

"*Sinku muy*, is it true that the American women do not know how to cook? The Fräulein says that they do all their housekeeping with a frying pan and a teapot. You will never marry an Americanska, will you, sonny?"

"No, motherkin, there is no danger," he replied, and then turned over and breathed as deeply as he could to make her think he was asleep.

"*Sinetchku muy*," came again from the bake oven.

"Motherkin, do go to sleep; you will need to be rested to-morrow;" but she did not heed his protest.

"*Sinku muy*, do you know that the schoolmaster has the consumption?"

Then he sat up in his bed with a start. "No, motherkin, it can't be true!"

"Yes, it is, and he drinks malt and chocolate and eats raw eggs, yet he coughs all the time and has to stay in bed. He isn't for long."

His schoolmaster ill, his best friend, the man to whom he owed his first glimpses into the larger world, and who encouraged his going away! "Oh, mother, it can't be true! How did it happen?"

"You know, *Yanetchku*, that they sent him to Nyitra to prison, because he would not teach the children the Magyar language. He took cold from the dampness there and he has been coughing ever since he came back."

Yanek buried his head in the pillow, as he began to feel the pain of belonging to his own people from whom the blessed America had almost weaned him. He had heard about the forcible Magyarization of the Slovaks,



but it was all so far away, so blessedly far; and now it had touched him so closely that it could not come much closer.

"Such things do not happen in America, my son, do they?"

"No, motherkin, they do not. No one molests you over there, no matter what language you speak." Then he embraced his pillow and held it close, as if it were the America which did not ask him about his race or speech; just gave herself and all she had to give to him, to help him be what he had become: A Slovak, yet an American, and something more than an American, a human being, unbranded, a child of God. Yes, the first thing he must do in the morning must be to go and see the schoolmaster. There was a moment of silence. Then his father groaned in his sleep and again muttered curses on Andrew Feher and all the Magyar crew which had taunted him about his proud son. Yet in spite of everything Yanek felt himself coming nearer, nearer home. Something drew him back, away from America with its many alluring comforts, its delicate, clean ways, and he began to be ashamed of himself, and called himself an ingrate and a cad.

His father's breathing became easier, and he himself seemed to find the heavy, odorous air less disagreeable. Reaching up, he felt the loaves of rye bread and with his fingers traced in their hard crust the shape of a rooster, his mother's mark, which each loaf bore so that it could not be mistaken for the bread of her neighbors, who took it to the same bake oven. The taste of fresh rye-bread came to his lips, and he recalled that he used to like the crust when it was crisp, and that his mother always left him hers; then he was a little boy again, running about in loose, flax trousers and a shirt of the same material, hard and harsh and scratchy in shape,

but not in texture, something like his pajamas. Life after all is the same everywhere, the difference is only in the feel of it, he thought.

"My golden son," his mother said again, after a while, "you are not sleeping."

"No, motherkin, how can I?" And he left his bed once more, and climbed again to the bake oven, and this time he held his mother closer and kissed her full upon the lips, which he had not done before, and her rough shirt did not hurt him though he held her very close.

She told him about Dr. Makutchky who had been to Russia and had come back with a strange religion, which he had got from a man whose name she could not remember. "And they say the doctor is crazy, for now he will not take any money from the poor, for giving medicine, and he does not go to church; but some of the people come to his house for a meeting, and the gendarmes have forbidden it. Nevertheless, they meet somewhere, sometimes out in the vineyards, another time in the *Bashanyitza*, and they say he will also be sent to prison like the schoolmaster, and get the coughing sickness."

She told him how dear everything had become, the coffee and the flour and the meat, more than twice as dear as when he was at home. "The Pan says it is due to the fact that the peasants go to America, but Dr. Makutchky says it is due to the men's having to be soldiers, and the government's building battleships, one of which costs more than a peasant could earn, even if he lived to be as old as Methuselah."

Then she told him more about their Katchka and the grandchildren, and that young Baron Smertzing had seduced certain girls with whom he had gone to school, and that there was trouble in the Redlich household, due to the German chemist, and that they were afraid *Mlada*

*Panka* Sophie also had the consumption like her mother.

She talked herself out in his arms and cried a little, and wanted to be sure that he was not angry at his father, and whether he would preach in the church; and when he thought her asleep, he slipped back into his bed; but hardly had he covered himself with the feather bed which had fallen to the floor, than his mother's voice was heard again.

"*Sinetchku*, do you know that *Mlada Panka* Christina is writing for the papers about us poor Slovaks?"

No, he had not known that.

"And they say she will be arrested and sent to Nyitra to prison and get the coughing sickness."

At that his heart began to beat heavily and he did not say anything in reply. For the last time, in a very sleepy voice his mother asked, "Are you asleep, my golden son?" And when he replied that he was not, she said;

"The *Mlada Panka* Christina lent me the sheets for your bed and she put sprigs of rosemary between them."

Then strange to say, the air in the room grew much sweeter, and he felt guiltily for the fragrant twigs, and when he held them in his hand, America seemed farther away and his home ever so much nearer than when the train had brought him only a few hours before.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE PAN'S DOMAIN

WHEN Yanek woke from his short but refreshing sleep, he seemed to be still on board ship, for he saw the floor swaying; but as the bed was so much larger, he began gradually to realize that he was on land, but where? Yes, it was clear to him now. There to the right was the door leading into the dormitory hall, straight ahead of him the sitting room which he shared with his chum, and through the windows he could see the waving elms. The windows however seemed smaller, the ceiling lower, and the trees were shrinking before his very eyes! What stunted, ugly things they had become overnight!

Evidently he was dreaming or waking from a dream for he heard a voice, a dear, familiar voice, chanting "*Varila, Mishitschka Kashitshku*," the Slovak version of "This little pig went to market," and accompanying the song, the vigorous movement of a brush.

He sat up in his bed with a start, and there in the next room was his mother. The first thing he noticed was that she was barefoot and that she wore a gayly colored, short skirt which showed her muscular calves nearly to the knees. She was alternately petting and brushing his shoe, and chanting to it as she used to chant to him when she wakened him by playing with his toes.

He saw her looking curiously at the broad, strangely shaped sole, at the yellow thread with which it was stitched, but she kept on brushing and fondling it until his strong arms held her and he took up the simple chant: "A little mouse cooked some porridge and she gave some to this one," and he kissed her on one cheek, "and some



to that one," and he kissed her on the other cheek, "and to this one she gave nothing," and with that he snatched the shoe from her hand, saying that in America the ladies did not blacken the gentlemen's shoes.

So this was not the ship on which he had spent nine rather miserable days, or his dormitory where he had been so happy. What had seemed to him the door into the hall, was the bake oven, and the sitting room was the kitchen, and the shrunk elm trees were brutally trimmed acacia trees. Of course, there was no shower bath, and no hot water, for this was not America, but a remote corner of Slovakland, from which he had gone away as the Pan's stable boy and had returned a Bachelor of Arts and Divinity and an ordained Protestant minister, fledged at a time when Evangelical clergymen were discarding their Prince Albert coats and getting rid of the appearance, if not of the odor of sanctity, and finally of the last symbol of their holy calling, the white string tie.

He returned to his home more Anglo-Saxon than Slav, more human than either, bearing in his face the marks of the new environment, and of a deep, consuming passion.

The two years he spent on the breakers of a coal mine in Pennsylvania might have been responsible for the fact that he had not grown so tall as those who knew him, expected, but there were desirable changes in his face. The heavy Slavic features bore a finer mold, and were enlivened by a pair of lustrous brown eyes which had lost the look of suspicion so common among his kind; there was something of the mystic around his thin nose and sensitive lips, but America had set his jaw rather firmly, and strengthened his chin.

He was a mystic, one who had learned to find his way not only to God, but also to the hearts of men. He looked



like a man who could govern by his affections rather than by his will, and indeed children and dogs went to him instinctively. When a baby remained unresponsive to his caresses or a dog kept on barking at him, he searched his soul for uncleanness or selfishness.

For more than four years he had stood expectantly at the rim of the universe waiting for the coming of the Kingdom of God for which he had been taught to work and pray, and which he saw in the near distance, as a sort of glorified United States of America, while the "bride adorned for her bridegroom descending from Heaven" was a deified Columbia. From this elevated vantage ground, in danger of being spoiled by being petted as a splendid example of the converted foreigner, and equipped to be a messenger of light to his people, he had stepped suddenly into the *Tohu Vavohu* of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, created by a decadent dynasty and by the clashing national ambitions and ideals of her unassimilated peoples.

It was dark when he had arrived in Pan Yan Szenitzky's domain the night before, and he was eager to see again his little world which he had left ten years before. The houses or rather a succession of houses leaning against one another, straggling along irregularly from the street down to the river, were all alike, tinted in the same yellowish color which was regularly renewed before Easter. Facing the street was the Pan's residence two stories high, the upper story being reached from the garden by a rather imposing flight of stone steps which he had so often ascended for the pleasure of sliding down the smooth balustrade.

Adjoining the Pan's house were the servants' quarters, then came the stables, the coachman's and gardener's houses, and the *hospice*, as it was called, where superannuated servants were sheltered, with such human

wreckage as could not be cared for by the town. It may have been the sight of these helpless people and the living so near them in his youth which had given him the keen sociological sense which he possessed.

All the way from the Pan's kitchen down to the river ran a shallow ditch, and no remembrance of the time when he waded in it as a boy could make it smell sweet this morning as he stepped out into the Pan's domain. On the steps of the *hospice* sat a little girl who rose at his approach, lifting her long arms as if she were going to fly through space, and then dropping them suddenly. Over her face flashed a gleam of light, as if it were struggling against the darkness which held her mind in thrall; but in an instant it was gone, leaving her face ashen gray and dull. She tried to speak but only inarticulate sounds escaped her lips.

Leaning against one of the acacia trees, Yanek saw Pepo, the idiot, looking as if he had never moved from his favorite lounging place. He had been left on the town, an illegitimate child, and the town not knowing what to do with him, nor caring much, let him drift about until very naturally he came into the Pan's *hospice*. Seeing Pepo and the imbecile child, Yanek remembered what had happened; for they talked about such things rather freely in Hraszova.

There was a young housemaid of the Pan's, an ignorant, very homely, coarse girl, Marisha by name. The boys always passed her by; none of them came to her window at night, and she was never asked to dance, although she stood for hours expectant, at the inn. Yet some one must have desired her, and when they asked her who was the father of the expected child, she lied to them; but when the boys she accused, indignantly denied, and threatened her, she named Pepo, and the town fairly shook from laughter.

So this wretched little girl was Pepo's and Marisha's! He tried to caress her but she spat at him, hissing like a snake.

Pepo turned around and smiled in his bland way, and to Yanek's greeting he replied: "Pepo is waiting for breakfast. First prayers, then breakfast. Wish it were breakfast first;" and he laughed a loud, hollow laugh. Pepo, besides being an idiot was naturally thievish, like a starling or a mountain rat, and wherever anything was missing, Pepo was caught and beaten, whether he was the culprit or not.

Just then Marisha came out of the stable, the only object Yanek had thus far seen which seemed not to have diminished. Robust as a man, and grown coarser with the years, an evil tongue in her head always, she dropped the milk pails at seeing him, put her arms akimbo and scrutinized the stranger. She replied to his pious greeting, after calling upon the devil once or twice, then wondered whether this could be the coachman's son whose face she had slapped many a time because he had walked with his muddy boots over the clean kitchen floor. When he admitted laughingly that he was the identical boy, she asked what kind of minister he was anyway, walking about in such ordinary clothes. "No doubt you are a Salvesh." Everything which was not of the conventional, religious type and which came from America was supposed to belong to the Salvation Army. "Did you bring me anything from America?" she demanded, and when nothing in the way of a present was forthcoming, with an air of contempt, she strode into the kitchen.

In Slovakland servants were hired by the year, from All Souls' day till that solemn day came around again; but at the Pan's they stayed till they were married, and many of them till they became a part of the vast throng which, on that holy day, revisited the earth.



Yanek stepped into the stable and there he was greeted by a friendly "*Yak sa mayu.*" There stood Martzin Stefechek, his boyhood's friend, grooming the horses as his father, one-eyed Stefechek, had groomed them before him. The meeting was spoiled, however, by Martzin's reference to their predatory habits when they were boys, out there in the Pan's garden. "How wonderful is the Divine Providence which can make out of a little apple thief a minister!" Worst of all he recalled to Yanek's mind one of the sins which he had forgotten: How, on a fair day, they had gone together to the honey-cake seller's booth and being tempted by the highly colored sweets had stolen a honeycake heart and eaten it. The fact that Martzin did the actual pilfering and had given Yanek the smaller half of the stolen heart, did not make him feel any more comfortable, though he recalled those mitigating circumstances.

"You know," Martzin continued, "I have been at it ever since, only now I steal girls' hearts," and he began telling how many Marishas and Katyushkas had fallen a prey to his lust, when most fortunately Stephan appeared, and overhearing the conversation, told Martzin to keep his foul mouth shut, or he would send him to the devil before his appointed time.

Father and son shook hands, and in the lingering clasp there were both asking and granting forgiveness. He warned his son not to go too far away, for after prayers at the Pan's there would be breakfast, and the old woman was cooking coffee as if it were Sunday, and the baker's boy was to bring white rolls; yes, indeed, they were going to live high in his honor.

As Yanek passed the Pan's house he involuntarily looked up to the second story, and as quickly looked away, for he thought he saw the shutters moved by a woman's hand, and he caught a glimpse of a bit of lace

hanging from a shapely arm, which he saw in a purely subconscious way, for he was thinking deeply.

Confused as he often had been by his teachers, who had made his small simple world so complex and so incomprehensively large, his knowledge of the laws which shackle the Universe caused him to doubt special interventions of Providence, yet in common with most mortals, upon whom good fortune has smiled, he believed in a guiding Providence as far as he personally was concerned. How could he doubt that, after his conversation with Martzin? Might not he have been just a stable hand, and his moral outlook as tainted and drear? Why, among all the boys he recalled, should he have been saved from that deadening toil in the mines, and led where he did not know a way existed? Who else but God was leading him, what else but the Divine Providence?

He was thinking thus as he looked up and down the street, at the row of straw thatched *isbas*, their adobe walls leaning in or out, alone, breaking the monotonous line. Besides the Pan's, there were just two houses of two stories: Baron Smertzing's *castell*, and the Redlich house, to which the second story had been added only recently.

Had he been in the United States he would have said that the town was booming; for there were several new houses, and a strip of cement walk had been wedged in between the cobble stones on which he had so often stubbed his toes and skinned his ankles. There was the tall chimney of the sugar refinery, and a whole cluster of buildings where Moritz Redlich's distillery, a very modest structure, stood, when he last looked down this same street.

Huge carts, drawn by white oxen, came past him, going out to the beet fields, the patient, big horned beasts



needing no goad to make them keep their leisurely pace. The carts were full of the "beeters," strangers to him, *Kopanyitchary*, or mountaineers, the poorest of the Slovaks. Driven by their Asiatic conquerors into the unfertile mountain regions, they were now the beneficiaries of the movement to America. They took the places of those whom the mines and steel furnaces had lured away by the high wages paid. These had no land to sell to the Sugar Trust, no money to pay the price of the ticket to America, and perhaps no enterprise to venture across the sea.

Behind the carts came boys and girls recruited for the task. They were singing as they marched though they would work till sunset and had not much else than cabbage soup and hard rye bread in their dinner pails.

At the end of the day's work they would sleep in the barracks built for them, all of them together in those low, unlighted, unaired barracks. Yet they were singing their solemn tunes, weird records of bygone, almost forgotten, national struggles, and keeping step to their music. It was their song which made Yanek realize how related he was to these people, and something in him began to sing though he did not open his lips, and he kept step with them though his feet did not move.

He greeted the workers with the pious Slovak salutation: "*Pomohiy wam Pan Boch*," may God help you; to which they replied in unison, interrupting their song, "May God grant it." Thus they marched on, and the cloud of dust rising beneath their feet, turned to pure gold in the young sunlight.

The marching beeters and the rattling carts were waking the town. Curling smoke rose above the thatched roofs, half awake apprentices began removing the shutters from the shop windows, whose heavy bars and strong locks did not indicate danger from burglars; for the

Slovaks are too honest and not sufficiently daring for that form of thieving; but these precautions are an index to the pervading feeling of suspicion characteristic of this part of Europe. To the man just back from America it seemed in such striking contrast to that country, where there was more danger but infinitely less precaution.

Peasant women were coming from the neighboring villages bringing their surplus stores to market, the cut of their waistcoats and the flowered pattern of their calico skirts marking them as from this village or that, from the mountains or the plains; while the style of their headcovering not only placed them geographically, but distinguished the married women from the maidens. He could greet them as if they were old acquaintances. "*Yak sa mate, babushka Hlubutelka.*" How are you, Grandmotherkin from Hluba? "So, so, thank God, *Mlady Panka.*"

He began to realize as they passed him with their friendly greeting that while his people might be less democratic than the Americans, they were, after all, more fraternal. In spite of the rumble of the now distant carts and the clatter of the women's boots with their iron heels beating time to their rhythmic, swaying walk, he heard a familiar cough, and there was Moritz Redlich, going to the distillery, early as always, to unlock the office, talking to himself and gesticulating as usual.

No doubt he had much to say to himself, for indeed the world for him was growing worse every day, with this building of a brewery which his sons had begun against his wish, the organization of a stock company in which he had no faith, and the use of beet tops instead of plums in the making of brandy; and what made his world worse than all these, his domestic unhappiness. He had nearly passed by the Pan's gate and had returned Yanek's greeting mechanically when, struck by the un-

familiarity of the voice, he turned involuntarily and looked into the smiling face of Yanek Hruby.

"Perhaps it is a fine morning," he replied dubiously, "but how are things in America, fine? Of course they are fine," and with that he walked close to the young man and took him by the lapel of his coat. "See here, Yanek, I want you to tell me if there is anything in America which is not *fine*. Every time I have a letter from my brothers they say it is fine, even though they ask me to lend them money. When a man comes back from over there smelling of carbolic acid like the cholera, with his face dried up like a prune and you say 'How are you?' he will say 'Fine.' I suppose over there when they hang a man, and ask him how he feels, he will say 'Fine.' Here we all groan like those carts and pull our load as reluctantly as those dumb oxen pull theirs."

He did not wait for an answer, for indeed every moment was precious, but removing his hand from Yanek's coat and laying it on his shoulder, he continued, "When you were a boy, you were kind to Sophie. She told me about it last night. Come to see us," and with that he renewed his conversation with himself, as he walked, gesticulating, toward the distillery.

Yanek's professor of Old Testament Literature had glorified for him the Hebrew race, and as he saw it now in the light of the heroic figures of the prophets of Israel, old man Redlich as he passed on seemed to him not unlike Jeremiah, whose tears almost quenched the Divine fire burning within him.

He was about to return home, remembering his father's admonition, or perhaps for another reason more or less connected with prayers at the Pan's house, when he caught a familiar odor, a mixture of sulphur matches and Turkish tobacco. Without turning he knew who was near; for had he not always gone to the "*Tabac Traffic*"



to buy that same Turkish tobacco for the Pan? It cost twenty-three *heller* a package, and sometimes, not often, the Pan gave him twenty-four, the extra one being for candy. It was indeed the Pan approaching, smoking his freshly lighted *Dresdenska*. Yanek greeted him as deferentially as he used to; for he was naturally polite and had never acquired the brusque manner which certain Americans affected. That pleased the Pan immensely, for "all those Slovaks come back boors," he used to say. He also had questions to ask. "Wasn't America so full of people now that the peasants could stay at home? And did Yanek not think that emigration was bad for them, that it spoiled them, and wasn't it sugar beets which caused them to leave home, and wasn't the world growing worse?" He fired the questions at him in rapid succession, like pistol shots, not even inquiring after his health, or replying to his greeting.

When to each query he received a polite and negative reply, he emptied his pipe nervously, knocking the precious *Dresdenska* carefully against his boot heel to empty it, then filled it again.

When Yanek, eager to change the conversation, told the Pan that he was delighted to see him looking so hale and hearty in spite of his years, and using the same tobacco he used to fetch for him, he replied curtly that he was not hale and hearty, that he had the rheumatism, and that the tobacco was not the same; it was poorer in quality; everything was becoming poorer and dearer. That damned emigration and the sugar beets did it, and the tobacco had a new name, a Magyar name, everything was Magyarized, even the tobacco, things were going that way. Yes indeed, the world was growing worse!" Then he puffed away silently at his relighted pipe.

He was thinking of a letter he had received from the Minister of the Interior, in which that dignitary made

him the tempting offer of a baronetcy. In consideration of his contribution to the well being of the *Magyar Orszag*, the Hungarian Government wished to bestow upon him the title of Baron. His name was to be slightly changed; the last syllable was to be dropped, and he would henceforth be Baron Schenitch.

Hm! he thought; he did not care for a title, he felt himself as noble as any Baron; but then, there were the daughters to be considered. For their sake he should like to accept the offer. But that last syllable! Why, by the throne of the Almighty, did they want to mutilate his name? Anyway it was time for prayers, and Christina had sent him to fetch Yanek to join the household in its morning devotions.

As he walked beside the Pan, up the stone steps, past the servants, past Martzin the stable boy, all of whom stood respectfully aside for their superiors, he saw himself in his coarse linen suit, smelling of the stable, standing where the others now stood, and his mind took up the thought which had filled it that morning. Perhaps it was the still uncontrolled pride in his heart which impelled him in all humility to stretch out his hand to the servants he had not yet greeted. Involuntarily, he took the hand of the little idiotic child who now seemed friendly and led her along, through the hallway and past the kitchen with its savory odors. Then the door of the big room opened and Christina came to greet him. As he clasped her hand and felt its warm pressure, and as he looked into her face, matured not only by years but by a strong faith, and the burdens that faith had brought upon her; and as the sight of her stirred no base passion within him but fanned to flame some holy aspiration in his soul, the thought of the Divine leading again took possession of him.

Nothing was changed in that familiar room, the se-



verity of its furnishing lightened by colorful Slovak embroidery. In one corner stood the old fashioned piano, and beside the large walnut table in the center of the room, the Pan's big chair. The wooden bench for the servants was by the tall clock with its brass weights, which were where they always were at this time of day, and on the wall opposite hung a lithograph picture of Calvin. The only modern object in the room was a life sized portrait of Madam Szenitzky, not as he knew her, but as she was when she came, a bride, to the Pan's domain.

Yanek did not dare look at Christina because opposite him sat her younger sister, Sonya, her face showing her to be the same old mischief. "She should have been a boy," the Pan always said with a sigh. When she met the young minister that morning she tried to kiss his hand in mock reverence, and when he would not let her, she kissed him on the cheek. "For ministers have to be kissed," she said with a roguish smile, in answer to her father's stern rebuke.

Yanek looked at the portrait on the wall. The fine, high forehead was like Christina's, who wore her hair the same way; the eyes were rather farther apart than Christina's, but hers seemed a little larger, the nose and mouth—— He was interrupted in his observations by the Pan's voice announcing the morning hymn, a quaint, slow, solemn measure. Yanek sang it with them, for he loved to sing, and had a remarkably good tenor voice. The first verse, however, was nearly spoiled for them, for he sang the tenor part, and the servants, accustomed to singing the melody, tried to follow him rather than Sonya, who always led them in a rather subdued soprano. She began to laugh as she always did on the slightest provocation, and the maids began to giggle; until the Pan knocked on the table with his *Dresdenska*, which

brought them to order. When the hymn was sung, the Pan took the heavy Bible from the table and handed it to Yanek without a word.

This then was to be the beginning of his ministry. He bowed his head for a moment before opening the huge brass clasps of The Book, not knowing what to read; but as it opened, his eyes fell upon the sixteenth chapter of Matthew. The Pan seemed not to be pleased by his reading, although he read with feeling and insight into the meaning of the words. The Bible, he felt, should be read like the Holy Book it was.

Marisha nudged her neighbor and whispered "He is a Salvesh," and the maid whispered it with a nudge to the next one, and the Pan knocked on the table again; but not before the word had been passed around.

However, he began to be interested as the reading proceeded and even the servants looked subdued and awed, when Yanek read about Jesus turning to the tempting Peter and saying "Get thee behind me, Satan." Marisha said afterwards that she thought the devil was in the very same room, where they were sitting. How commandingly and yet enticingly Yanek read: "If any man would come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

They all stood to pray, and later Sonya reported to Christina that their father was all the while turning his *Dresdenska* up and down, as if he were undecided what to do next, and that Marisha was wiping her eyes as if she had been peeling onions. Of course she was scolded by her sister for looking around during prayers, and replied that she "couldn't help it, His Reverence was so

good to look at, though evidently he did not know how to kiss a girl."

What pleased Yanek most, as they left the room, was not that the Pan told him he would ask the minister to invite him to preach some Sunday, not that Marisha looked at him more kindly, or that his father's and mother's faces glowed with pride; not even that Christina thanked him for the prayer. What pleased him most was, that the idiotic child took hold of his hand and passed out with him and clung to him until they reached the kitchen, where her breakfast awaited her.

After prayers the Pan restlessly paced the floor still turning his *Dresdenska* up and down; finally he went to his desk and wrote a letter. He wrote it on one of the large, official looking sheets of paper which he always used when the letter was of importance. This is what he wrote:

"Your Excellency,

I have received your gracious letter offering me a Baronetcy in consideration of the services I am supposed to have rendered the State. I have noticed that when you made that same offer to rich Jews, they were asked to contribute to the royal treasury a part of their wealth. Had you asked me a similar price I might have been tempted to accept your offer; for I am a vain and sinful man. But you are asking me for something which seems to you very trivial, the dropping of a Slavic suffix from my name, and a change in its spelling; in short you are asking me to forfeit my historic inheritance, to sell my "birthright for a mess of pottage," to cut myself loose from my people who, though poor and ignorant, are my people nevertheless. Permit me to request your excellency to open the Holy Bible at the sixteenth chapter of Matthew and the twenty-sixth verse where you will find my answer.

Yours most sincerely, and as long as I live,  
Szenitzky."

The last syllable was underscored.

When he showed the letter to his children, Sonya told him he was a "horrid old bear," but she would forgive him for she intended to get married anyway, and she would surely marry a Baron, unless—and she smiled mischievously at her sister—unless she married a minister. Christina kissed her father on both cheeks and said: "The Lord has led you." When she told Yanek what had happened, it further confirmed him in his faith in the Divine Providence.



## CHAPTER FIVE: PLUM BRANDY

**T**HUS far the Redlich sons had spared the old distillery, but all around it new buildings had risen, in quick succession. First the brewery, followed by the malt house, a yeast factory and a big engine room. Menacingly tall, they looked down upon the original, small gray structure, and it seemed to shrink daily as their walls towered above it.

Moritz Redlich shrank with it, for the little place was part of him, and when they pulled out the old wooden vats, they were tearing at his very heart. Just at this time the vats would have been filled with the rich, blue plums, which the peasants would shovel in, laughing and singing while at their task. They never watched Moritz Redlich weigh the fruit, and when he said: "*Bratre*, you have one hundred *killo* of plums," they knew that it was a hundred and no more.

When they came into the office for their pay he would treat them to his oldest and finest brandy, and they would always say: "*Na Zdrav*" and drink to his health; and when they had wiped their mouths on the backs of their hands they would smack their lips and declare that his *slivovitz* was getting better every year.

Now alas! the yard was crowded by foreign workmen. Italians for the stone work, Bohemian bricklayers, German machinists, and Slovaks from a distant *comitat* who went about their work sullenly and did not drink to his health when, midway between each working period, the brandy was passed.

Just this morning one of those Americanized Slovaks was haranguing them while they were at their work. He called them stupid fools, who worked as underlings in a



land where they ought to be masters. "Over in America it is fine," and he opened his cloth coat and showed them his gold watch and chain, and his fountain pen, and he jingled the silver dollars in his pocket. "In America when the boss would not pay me three dollars a day I told him to go to Hell and I walked off to another job.

"You are a pack of fools! Who do you think will pay for this brewery but you, who will pay for those copper stills and for that big smokestack, you poor fools?" He threw away a generous cigar stump which a dozen hands were ready to pick up, and walked off.

Moritz Redlich listened and shook his head and talked to himself; not because he had anything to say to himself but because he was trying to drive away the thoughts which trooped through his brain like wild horses, and which he could not control.

"Yes, it is fine in America," he was saying. "Look at my fine watch, look at my fine clothes, look at my fountain pen!" His lips kept repeating the words mechanically, while through his brain ran the last quarrels with his sons.

"Money," he had said, "of course you must have money! But whose money are you getting? The money of widows and orphans, and all they get in return is pieces of colored paper which you call stock; and suppose you can't compete with the Bohemian breweries, and suppose your yeast doesn't keep, and suppose the brandy is rank, and the peasants will not drink it, as they ought not; how will you pay the money back?"

Of course they told him he was an old foggy and that all modern business is done on credit. And did not they get the best possible man as chemist and manager, and did they not import a brewer from Bohemia, and were they not as sure as any one could be, that they would make piles of money?

"And what of it, if you do make the money?" and the reply repeated itself a dozen times in his mind. "Have I not always made enough, and did I not always make it honestly? Have you ever wanted for anything, did I not send you to school and did I not support my sister's children, and did I not help my brothers in America?" Then he began talking to himself again about how *fine* everything was in America.

Yet another thought came and persisted, and he repeated it again and again: "I wish to God I had never laid eyes on that chemist. It is he who has put this grand idea into their heads, it is he who is making them dishonest, and who is—I shouldn't say it—I know I shouldn't say it—it is he who is breaking up my home! Are you blind, my boys, are you blind?"

Yes, indeed they were blind; blind to their father's grief. What they saw was the fact that they wanted capital, not because they wanted money, but because capital would raise them into a new class of privileged citizens. A million *crowns* of capital and they would be manufacturers on a grand scale, and that would increase their vote threefold.

"Just think, father, what that will mean, when it comes to the election of the district judge, or of a member of parliament. Think of the prestige, the prestige! Some day, who knows, you might receive a title, and how wonderful that would be!"

Into what a rage he flew, as he shrieked: "Title! Title! A title, because you have borrowed poor people's money! A title because——" He tried to divert his thoughts: "In America it is fine," he said to himself again, and he buttoned and unbuttoned his coat as he saw the man doing, who harangued the workers. But his thoughts persisted in coming back and drowning his prattle.

"Title! Title! Title! Haven't I given you a good

name? Is there any Jew around here who has a better name than mine? Am I not respected because I am Moritz Redlich and have made plum brandy in an honest fashion, and have dealt honestly with my customers, and have been charitable toward the poor?

"What do you say? That they call you Jews and won't take you into their Casino and won't let you dance with their women? Do you think you would be anything else to them than Jews if you were called Herr *von* Redlich? A title won't change the shape of your noses! A title won't take the crook out of your backs, put there by your honest ancestors who had to bear the heavy burdens of the exile! Title! Title! Title!" he repeated and he flew into a rage and beat his desk so that the dust from it rose in thick clouds, and he bit his lips till he could taste the sweet, warm blood. When the paroxysm of wrath had spent itself he began prattling again about America. "Look at my fine watch, and at my fine fountain pen! Yes, in America it is all fine, fine!"

He always coughed harder when he became excited, but this time it was worse than ever, and long after the irritation in his throat had ceased, he was still coughing, for Herr Walter Ritter, the chemist and manager, had entered the office. The old man did not want to see him, and did not want to talk to him. "God knows," he soliloquized, "I never hated a single human being; but I hate that man. I hate the very sight of him."

"Is the Herr Sandor in?" Herr Ritter asked.

"No, he is not. What do you want?"

"The new sign has come from Budapest and I want to consult with the Herr Sandor about putting it up."

"A new sign, who has ordered a new sign? I did not want a new sign, the old one is good enough," and he began to cough again.



Yes, that was one of the things they had quarreled about, he and his sons. The old firm was no more, and now they had ordered a sign to go the whole length of the building. In huge gold letters it was to be proclaimed to the world that the old firm of Moritz Redlich was no more, and that the Hungarian National Distilling and Brewing Company had taken its place; and the sign was to be in the Magyar language of course.

"*Aber*, Herr Redlich, don't get excited!" Herr Ritter exclaimed. "I shall wait till the Herr Sandor comes back."

How glad Moritz Redlich was that he went away, for he hated him. He hated his broad head, his florid face, his keen, greenish gray, bespectacled eyes, his Berlineze German, the way he rolled his r's in his throat, the submissive way in which he talked to his sons, his flatteries of his wife; and now that man came talking to him about a new sign!

At last the Herr Sandor came, the president of the new company. If one had met him with other Hungarians he would not have singled him out as a Jew; for he shared with his race that peculiar ability to adjust himself to his environment. His nose was not obtrusively Semitic, and his eyes though dark had none of the dreamy look of his race; nor were they shrewd; the fire in them was of the love of life, awakened by his Magyar associates. He had lived and loved as they had, he had served a year as officer volunteer in the army, and walked erect although he was naturally stoop shouldered. His mustaches were carefully trained, and he dressed faultlessly.

He had married a wealthy Jewess, from a home in which Judaism was only a memory and not a pleasant one, and they agreed that their home was to be free from the yoke of the ritual, and that should they have children



they should be shielded from the stigma of Judaism. They never went to the synagogue, not even on the great holy days. The net result was, that they were socially isolated; for while the Gentile men associated with him and occasionally visited him, especially when there was a prospect of something good to eat, the women never called on his wife or invited her to their homes.

When he entered the office the old man was walking up and down, coughing nervously and gesticulating. Sandor was late, very late; but he had good news for his father. He and Rosa were very happy over the birth of a boy, that morning. The old man embraced his son, and congratulated him. His cough subsided. Of course it was better at such news. A new Redlich, his first grandson! "May God grant it will not be the last!"

"Let me see," he said, "a week from to-day will be the circumcision, and all the relatives must be invited. I am thankful to God that I have lived to see this day. I have had many troubles, but an old man must have them, that is inevitable; but now I shall be happy in the happiness of my son. Even here in Hungary things are 'fine' when a grandson is born! Think of it, a grandson!" and he rubbed his hands, and something like a smile flitted across his face. "It's fine!" he repeated over and over again.

His son did not reply to his suggestion about the circumcision, for he had something on his mind which he feared might hurt his father; so he would not tell him till he must. He went to his desk, and opened his letters while his father continued rubbing his hands and saying how "fine" it was that he had a grandson. He did not disturb his son for a while, then he began to cough. "Sandor," he said at last, "I have been thinking that I should go to see the Rabbi and tell him about it, and I want to send for your Uncle David to come and preside

at the circumcision. It will please the old man—for you know to a pious man that is one of the steps to Heaven—to make a Jew out of a little child.

“And you know whom I am going to invite? Pan Yan Szenitzky and the priest. They were present at the feast of circumcision when you were a baby.” He laughed. “And when they heard you squeal, Pan Yan Szenitzky laughed and said: ‘He has got a grand voice;’ but Father Kalman didn’t laugh at all. He said: ‘It hurts to be a Jew, and it hurts from the beginning to the end,’ and then he shook his head. You see I will have to invite them. I know Rosa won’t object and neither will you. You like the *Goyim*.”

Sandor had dropped the letters, and in a voice which was both tender and tense he said: “Father dear, that boy of mine is going to escape the pain that Father Kalman spoke of, and the whole of it, if I can manage it. I was going to tell you that our boy is not going to be circumcised.”

If the distillery had fallen in at that moment or the new smokestack tumbled down upon the old man, the weight that struck him could not have been heavier. He could not get his breath at first, his face grew purple, he tried to speak, but he was not saying anything, although his tongue involuntarily moistened his dry lips. At last words came out of his contracted throat. “You say that you will not have *my grandson* circumcised?—the grandson of Moritz Redlich? The son of a Jew not circumcised, the grandson of Moritz Redlich?” He could but repeat it over and over again.

“I would like to have spared you this pain, father,” his son said, coming to him and putting his arm around his neck; “but Rosa and I have agreed that we shall try to save our children from the stigma of being Jews. We are not Jews in our hearts, and what is the use of going

through that cruel form which hurts the child, and can do it no earthly good? We thought that as you are so broad minded—— Don't, father dear, don't carry on so! One would think that a great calamity had come upon us, the way you act!"

Moritz Redlich was wringing his hands, sobbing, and coughing. "I know, I know it is my fault! I haven't been strict enough in your bringing up! I deserve it all!" he wailed between his sobs. "I am not thinking of myself, I am thinking of the dead, I am thinking of your pious mother, of Gittele, my *selig* wife, my golden wife! I shall soon go over the bridge to meet her, and what will she say to me? Gittele, my golden wife, this would not have happened if you had lived!" and he collapsed in his chair.

Recovering himself after a while he wiped his eyes and blew his nose repeatedly. Then, as calmly as he could, he asked: "And what are you going to make out of that little *Yehude*, what kind of Christian? Are you going to take him to the big church on the market place, carry your child out through the streets to have him baptized? And what of the child after that?"

"Do you believe that sparing him the pain of circumcision will save him from being called a Jew? Will he look less like a Jew, act less like one, because you have spared his foreskin? What about his kin, his own flesh and blood? I suppose when the boys tell him: 'There goes Moritz Redlich, your grandfather,' he will deny me, he will run away from me as if I had the plague.

"If you or Rosa had in your hearts the religion of Father Kalman, or of Pan Yan Szenitzky, and you could make of him a real, honest, pious Christian, I would say, though it broke my heart, go ahead, do it. But you have no God in your heart or in your home. All you are thinking about is the big plant and where to get money



to build it bigger, so that some day you may get a title. Aha, I see now, I see now," and he laughed, though it was more like a cry of anguish. "You want that title. You think that the Herr Minister will say: 'There is Sandor Redlich, he is not only rich and the president of a great corporation; but he is bringing up his son in the Christian faith; we will give him a title.' It's the title! The title!"

"You are mistaken, father. We are not going to have him baptized, not yet. However, we are going to have a feast to celebrate his birth, but, father dear, there will be no circumcision."

Moritz Redlich left the office gasping for air. He must go out and away; but where could he go? He was suffocating, and the walls of the room seemed to come nearer and nearer, to crush him. He thought he might get some comfort by going out into the distillery and looking at the old still, at the barrels with his name burned into them. He fondled them with a trembling hand; there it still was: Moritz Redlich, Slivovitz, Hraszova, Hungary, —that was his at any rate—part of him.

But they were hammering against the stone walls of that very building. "They are tearing it to pieces, the fiends! They must not! Halt!" he cried. "Halt! Halt!" What were those vandals doing? He ran out through the big gate to the front of the building. They were doing it! They had done it! They were taking down the old sign! They were lifting it from the hooks he had driven in there forty years ago or more! There stood Herr Ritter and the workmen, putting a rope around it and pulling it down! It was dangling in the air, it was hanging by a rope, a part of himself! Moritz Redlich hanging by a rope!



## CHAPTER SIX: LOVE ONE!

“EVERY place is good but home is the best.”

“Yes, *Mamushka*, it is so,” he replied when she repeated the old Slovak proverb, watching him as he ate his frugal breakfast, which consisted of coffee and white rolls, “as if it were Sunday.”

“When you were a little boy, *Yanetchku*, you would put those horns on your head and you would run at me and say, ‘Mu, mu,’ and try to frighten me.”

“Yes, *Mamushka*,” he replied, thinking her very thoughts. Everything brought back the memories of his youth, even the taste of the weak brew of chickory which went by the name of coffee, and the rolls of which there were three kinds, *Semle*, *Vekle* and *Rohitchky*. It was the *Rohitchky*, the little horns he liked the best, and that kind his mother had got for him.

“And then,” she continued, “you would always unwind the crust until it looked like a long golden curl, and you used to say, ‘That looks like Christina’s curl,’ and you would eat it this way.” And she showed him just how he did when he was a little boy. Yes, he was thinking about that too, only strange to say the curls he saw to-day were not golden but black.

“Her heart is as golden as her curls,” his mother prattled on, sipping her coffee, yet looking over the cup at her son. “It is *Mlada Panka* Christina here, and *Mlada Panka* Christina there. She is like her mother, God rest her soul. What a saint she was! *Tak, tak!* we all must go, but God takes the best first; the hard, sour apples stay longest on the tree.”

“No, *Mamushka*, that isn’t so. He has left you, and

you are not a hard, sour apple;" and then he gave her a big kiss. You are as sweet, *Mamushka*, as the big, yellow, golden apples *Babushka* used to give me when I answered her questions out of the catechism. Tell me, dearest, after whom does Sonya take?"

"God knows, my son, perhaps after her father who, and the *Pan* will forgive me, was the very devil when he was a young man. When he came into the kitchen, all the maids ran either from him or to him."

"*Mamushka*, dear, where did you run?" he asked laughing at his little joke; and she slapped his mouth playfully and pretended to be hurt, but she did not answer his question.

After breakfast he was going to see the schoolmaster; but his married sister came from a neighboring village bringing her whole family, and there was much embracing and kissing, and they all insisted on kissing him right square on his lips, which he did not relish in the least, especially as his brother-in-law had taken his morning *Palenka*, and besides that, there was garlic on his breath. Yanek having been educated in a hygienically unemotional atmosphere, and having taken part in a debate in which they discussed individual communion cups versus the common cup, tried to avoid the osculatory demonstrations. His relatives took his caution for pride, and the first meeting with them was not very auspicious.

This was the time to unpack the presents. He had a fountain pen for his older nephew, who told him frankly that he had hoped he would bring him a revolver, and the picture book he gave the younger one was equally unwelcome, as he had expected a watch. Fortunately, little Theresa was highly pleased with her ring, which of course she must run out and show to all the children, and which she promptly lost on the way. Then there was heavy punishment meted out, and much weeping and

wailing and confusion, in trying to find the lost trinket. When quiet was restored, he had to listen to his sister's complaints about her husband. He was too rough with the children, and he drank too much, and who knew but what they too would have to sell their land and go to America? "But *Chlava Bohu*," praise God, "the children are well and so smart, and maybe, if God wills, I need not bear a child this year."

His brother-in-law wanted to know if it was true that in some places in America one couldn't buy any liquor, and whether people really could be healthy drinking only water, and whether they didn't catch cold in their stomachs.

Then his Uncle Petrushko came, greatly aged, crippled by rheumatism and hobbling on a cane; ignorant of letters but wise with the wisdom of the humble. Yanek used to go to him on Sunday afternoons to read to him out of his first schoolbooks, and he tried to explain what he did not quite understand himself: how if the earth was round, the people beneath us, over there in America, could walk on their heads. Uncle Petrushko inquired after the condition of his countrymen over there "*Za More*," across the sea. He had heard wonderful things. How they were permitted to form a big National Society, and how those Slovaks printed newspapers and books and were planning to liberate their oppressed countrymen from the Magyar yoke. Would Yanek not come to his *isba* and read to him as he used to, and tell him all about it? His neighbors who had come back from America seemed only to know that you could say "damn it" to anybody you pleased, and how cheap the meat was, and how they bought their beer by the barrel and that if you wanted to get a drink on Sunday, you had to go to the back door, and that when you drank too much you were likely to be arrested.



Yanek was heartily glad to see *Babushka* Theresa who came in, after dinner, driving in her queer yellow cart. She was everybody's *Babushka*, although she was related to no one except the Pan, and that distantly. She had never emancipated herself from her picturesque Slovak clothes, and she preferred to be called *Babushka* rather than *Panyi Velcomoshna*, to which she was entitled by virtue of her wealth. It was she who gave Yanek the sweet, golden apple for knowing his catechism, and he told her he remembered that once when he had the measles, she brought him an orange, the first he had ever eaten. In America he thought of her every time he ate one, which was very often; for he had one for breakfast nearly every morning.

It was the *Babushka* who used to talk to him about the Lord Jesus, not as the minister talked, as if He were far away, over in Palestine or in Heaven on the right hand of the Father; but as if He were right there in the room with them. The very way in which she spoke His name, "*Pan Jeshzitshek*" was endearing and winning; while when the minister, in his pompous way and with his pulpit drawl, talked of the "*Pan Jesu Christus*" he could think of nothing but the awful Day of Judgment!

Yes, indeed the *Babushka* was on intimate terms with the Lord, and one day she looked straight into his face and asked: "Do you love the *Pan Jeshzitshek*?" And then she laid her hand on his head and said: "If you will love Him and follow Him you will be one of His disciples, and a great blessing to the people."

Now she had only one tooth left, her head shook from palsy, and her face was all wrinkled, but it was illumined by a holy light.

"I have prayed for you every day," she said, "and I have asked two things for you. One of them has been granted, the other I know will be."



He had remembered *Babushka's* sweet apples and the orange she brought him when he had the measles, but he had forgotten her ardent faith; and did not know that his people were supremely religious, that they were drinking from the same spiritual fountain from which he had been drinking, and that it was not discovered in America.

The Hussites had come from Bohemia into the Carpathian mountains, fleeing from their persecutors and had found safe shelter among their racial kinsmen; the faith of Luther and Calvin spread there with greater rapidity than in Germany, and in this very place men had died as martyrs for their faith. Roman Catholics never became narrow and bigoted, and Protestant and Catholics had learned to live side by side without the bitterness and rancor seldom absent, even in his free America. When the faith of the Fathers grew sterile there were always seekers after God, such as *Babushka*, who met together for prayer and for a free expression of their religious ideas. Yanek was astonished to find that *Babushka* had read the sermons of Spurgeon and Moody, and that she kept herself in touch with the evangelistic movements of England and Germany. Yanek was listening to her in a half hearted way for which he reproached himself. He was impatient to see his beloved schoolmaster.

At last the relatives took their departure, and *Babushka*, under protest, permitted him to help her into the yellow cart, and he could slip away. Even then, however, his progress was not easy; for he was stopped by Sonya calling to him from her window. She wanted to ask him a number of questions.

"Was it true that the American girls proposed to the men, and did one ever propose to him? The Fräulein said they did, so of course it must be true; and were the

American girls as pretty as the Slovak girls, and were the stores really so big that one could get lost in them, and above all, could he play tennis and would he play with her? Tennis was all the rage, and she had learned how to keep tally. Was it not beautiful the way they counted? Lofe feefteen, lofe tirty, lofe forty?"

Why was it impossible for him to look into her face when he answered her questions? Was it a sense of guilt, was it the stirring of passion within him? Was it the thought of Christina to whom he made love in the pigeon loft when he was fourteen years of age?

Certainly he could play tennis, and he would play with her if she wanted him to, he replied, and summoning all his courage, he looked boldly into her eyes.

"But remember," she said, shaking her finger at him, "you have to play well, else I can't introduce you at the Club."

He did not quite catch the full meaning of that until she had closed the window. Then he regretted having promised to play, for he realized that it was only as the good tennis player that he could be introduced at the Athletic Club, and not as Yanek Hruby, the son of a coachman. He was, after all, just a man, stirred by the sight of black eyes and flattered by a pretty girl's invitation to play tennis, and he did not hold his head quite so high as he walked up the street toward the schoolmaster's lodgings.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE SCHOOLMASTER

THERE were two of nearly everything in Hraszova. Two apothecaries, two inns, two casinos, two midwives and two doctors. When a Slovak did not surrender to the Magyars, change the spelling of his name or announce his wares in the language of his rulers, he had competition. It was not a matter of cheaper or dearer, of better or worse; it was a matter of patriotism or policy (and so often the two are identical), to buy your drugs or drink your wine, or play your cards or be ushered into the world, or kept from an untimely death, in the socially and officially sanctioned way.

It did not matter much to the Magyars that a purveyor of goods or a guardian of health or what not, was a Jew, so long as he had changed Cohn into Kohany, or Weiss into Feher, or Klein into Kish. The right spelling of a name covered a multitude of sins, and in so many cases there were multitudes to cover. Nationalism encouraged hypocrisy on a grander scale than perhaps religion ever had. To pretend to be religious was no longer profitable; to shout "*Elyen a Magyar*" was more effective than to repeat a thousand "Hail Mary's" and not so repugnant. As a consequence, the rich Jews waxed their mustaches *a là Magyar*, drank their wine out of glasses decorated in red, white and green, danced *Czardas* and hired the Gypsies to serenade their sweethearts and friends on their birthdays.

Dr. Makutchky was the physician of the Slovaks and the poorer Jews, and everybody else who was seriously ill. When the Judge or the Baron had a headache after a too lengthy session at the inn, and needed something

to stir their sluggish livers, they sent for Dr. Lonyai, whose ancestors once ministered to Jehovah and answered to the name of Cohn. When Dr. Lonyai's pills did not have the desired effect and his patients were threatened or thought they were threatened by apoplexy, it was Dr. Makutchky who was summoned, and he usually gave them emetics and purgatives enough to make them forswear wine, the flesh and the devil in all their seductive forms, for at least a fortnight.

Dr. Lonyai was a cadaverous, suave, smiling, insignificant individual. The number of Egyptian cigarettes he consumed may have given him his mumified appearance; for he was always either smoking or rolling one. He was the self-appointed, official tattler of the town, which made him a favorite among certain women. He told the rich Jewesses how the Baroness discovered that her children's governess was her husband's mistress, and he told it with all the fine *nuances* of a connoisseur in scandals. In Magyar circles he made sport of the shortcomings of his Jewish patients, wherever such stories were appreciated. He was neither trusted nor loved; yet welcomed, and called for minor ailments and *ennui*, and he relieved both. He had been in Hraszova only a few years, having come there directly from the University, had prospered because his name was not Cohn, and was now looking for a wife with a generous dowry.

Dr. Makutchky was a typical Slovak. Ethnologists will object to this statement because they say there is never a typical anything, that type is something we imagine; but exceptions prove the rule. If we imagine the typical Slav to have a broad skull measuring eighty-two centimeters in width, in proportion to an imaginary one hundred in length, and small deeply set brown eyes, far apart; if his face is rather broad, with the cheek bones slightly protruding, and if he has such a luxurious



growth of beard that his small nose has to struggle hard to be seen—then he is a typical Slav, ethnologists or no ethnologists.

As has been said there were two of nearly everything in Hraszova except schoolmasters, and of these there were three; for Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish children learned their alphabets and their multiplication tables under the strict supervision of their respective churches. When Yanek Hrubby began going to school, the Protestant teacher was noted for the redness of his bandana handkerchief, the thickness of his Spanish grape switch, and the ugliness of his temper. Fortunately for that whole generation of school children, during Yanek's first year, the handkerchief, the grape switch and the teacher's temper combined in bringing about an apoplectic stroke, which ended his career and brought the new schoolmaster.

Yanek Hrubby could not be trusted to tell of the share he had in precipitating this benevolent catastrophe, for he was afflicted by a sensitive conscience, which made him magnify his own guilt. The truth was, that the bandana, into which the teacher blew those terrific blasts which signified the rising of his temper, was loaded with red pepper on that particular morning. Yanek had nothing to do with placing the *paprika*. His guilt consisted in soaking the grape switch in vinegar which, according to schoolroom traditions, would make it so brittle that at the first stroke it would break. The switch broke. Whether because of the vinegar or because of the excessive vigor with which it was wielded will not be revealed till the Day of Judgment, but till that day, Yanek will accuse himself of having had a share, if not the chief share in the death of the tyrant. However, he with the other children enjoyed their holiday on the day of the funeral, and the minister delivered an eloquent

eulogy in which there was one outstanding truth, namely, that "the teacher died in the exercise of his duty." When his successor came, it marked the beginning of a new era.

The schoolmaster was in bed when Yanek called, and the doctor was there, walking up and down the room, talking in his quick, explosive, Slovak way, in that language which has retained those elemental sounds with which our remote ancestors began to imitate the language of nature. A succession of consonants and harsh gutturals, with here and there a vowel, usually long sustained, as if the speaker wished to make the most of it, not knowing when he would have a chance at another one. If it is true that the Slavs are great linguists, it may be due to the fact that their language calls into play every organ which can create sound, so that the linguistic apparatus is well trained.

"You lie still and keep your mouth shut, or I will give you this glass cigarette to suck until your visitor is gone," said the doctor, shaking the thermometer before his patient's face and at the same time gently pulling the coverlet over his emaciated hands.

"Don't mind the old grizzly bear Yanek, my boy," said the schoolmaster in a whisper. "I am glad to see you," and he attempted to shake his hand, without drawing his own from under the covers. "He is trying to make me believe that I am a sick man, when I have only a bad cold."

"Bad cold!" the doctor ejaculated, "bad cold! I wish the Chief Justice had just such a cold as you have. We would have a vacancy on the bench in six weeks if he were where you are. I will give you only four weeks unless I can get you out of this beastly hole, and you behave better." He resumed his walking up and down the room and finally, stopping in front of one of the two small windows, he shook his fist at it, crying: "Look at

it! I couldn't stick my head through it! It is just big enough to let you know that it is daylight!"

"He couldn't stick his head through a barn door," said the teacher in a stage whisper, ducking under the covers. When the doctor turned angrily around he pointed at Yanek as the guilty one.

"This is no joke," the doctor said tartly. "Your prison couldn't have been worse."

Yanek suggested timidly, that in America they cured this disease by putting the patient into a tent.

"Tents!" the doctor ejaculated. "I know all about them. Tents indeed! If I should suggest that to my learned patient, who, by the way, is a great ignoramus in some things, he would say: 'and what about the night air?' Ugh! What about the night air! His ancestors saw spooks at night, so he is afraid of the night air. Keep the spooks out and swallow germs by the bushel!" Turning to the window again, he gave vent to his indignation. "The State, *Magyar Orszag*, a civilized State pouncing on a helpless individual! Not satisfied by putting him into a filthy prison, when he is released, they bar him from his home and put him into this vile hole! They want to murder him, because"—and he laughed grimly—"because he taught little Slovak children that two times two are four, in Slovak. The National State, that abomination of abominations, enforcing culture with the butt of the gun!"

"The Magyars——"

"Of course, you say the Magyars!" He turned fiercely on the schoolmaster who had uttered the word. "The Germans are no better; if anything they are the masters in building that structure, that combination of gallows and university, the *Kultur* of the *Streng Verboten*.

"We Slavs are no better, and we are clumsier at it.



Your Mother Russia, as ~~you~~ call it," and with that he carried out his threat and put the thermometer into the schoolmaster's mouth, although he himself was doing the talking. He held his big fingers on the throbbing pulse of his patient, and continued: "Your Mother Russia, is she any better? See what she has done to the Poles, and the Poles, are they any better? They sit tight on the Ruthenians. It's the same thing all through, it's the National State that is the curse of it, and you are its victim." He took the thermometer, examined it, shook it with an angry gesture and dropped it into a glass of water, as if it were the guilty National State he was drowning.

"I am going to get you out of this stinking hole the very first thing," he continued, "so that you may get well and sacrifice yourself again upon the altar of your country; but remember, you will destroy one monster only to create another. Remember that."

As if to discourage a reply he started toward the door, pushing his hand through his upstanding, rebellious hair. "Your visitor," he flung back, "may stay till Christina comes, and when she comes he may stay as long as he wants to, for then he will be harmless. By the way," he turned to Yanek, "have you a revolver? I see you have a fountain pen, like all the Americans. Shoot him if he talks," and shaking his fist at the offending window, he edged his way through the low, narrow door, and left them.

When he was gone the schoolmaster's hand stole from under the cover. Yanek grasped it and so, clinging to each other, they sat silently, while a ray of the afternoon sun stealing in through the tiny window lighted the little room, and circled around the head of the sick man, like a halo.

If Dr. Makutchky was a typical Slav, Pan Martin



Miklos, the teacher, was not a Slav at all. His was the head of a Lombard, such as Leonardo da Vinci might have used for his model when he painted the disciple John in the "Last Supper." The wasting disease made his head appear longer, and the pallor of his face gave added brilliancy to the eyes, which Yanek thought were like the glass disk of a furnace, revealing the glow within.

At length the schoolmaster broke the silence. "Don't mind the doctor," he said, "he is one of God's wild men. Yes, I know I mustn't talk, but you won't shoot me, will you?"

Yanek had taken from the table a large bound volume of illustrated magazines, and he soon discovered that it was one of his old friends, one of the volumes he had devoured in his book hungry days. Every picture was familiar, he even remembered the stories, the novels which had stirred his imagination, the familiar heroines with whom he had fallen in love. He found the picture which had always reminded him of Christina. At least so Christina would look when he claimed her as his own.

The schoolmaster watched him looking through the volume. "Do you remember what you always read first when I lent you those magazines?" and not waiting for an answer: "the funny page. All the children did that, and later you would look for the novels. Fun first, then romance, and tragedy next. Tragedy next, my boy; that comes last, and the last is the best.

"No, no, this won't hurt me. That crazy doctor doesn't know anything about it. The tragedy isn't so bad when you suffer innocently. Christina talks to me about her Jesus. She talks to me just as *Babushka* does about the dear *Jeshzitshek*; but no one knows Him till one has suffered innocently. Yes, I have been there."

He continued in brief snatches, fighting back the inevitable cough.

"The jail, the beggars and the thieves, you are with them, but not one of them—it helps to know you are not one of them,—the court and the prosecutor—you grow bigger and bigger when they accuse you and call the right the wrong and the wrong the right—you are not one of them and it helps——

"The Judge who folds his fat hands and crosses his legs and who pronounces you guilty—when he knows you are innocent—you rise above him, infinitely above him, and it helps, it all helps—— The crowd which gaps at you and the friends who said they were friends and are ashamed to look at you for fear of incriminating themselves—you are not one of them, and then the poor fellows who lead you away, the jailers, thank God, you are not one of them. Don't try to stop me—I *will* talk.

"*Babushka* and Christina talk about being with the Lord and talking to Him; they don't know, the poor dear women. I know. I know. I have walked through the streets, a condemned man. I have seen them pointing their fingers at me, and I was lifted into the very center of the universe above them, far above them—— Yes, I cried like a child, but the tears washed all the suffering out of me. I knew what Jesus meant when He said: 'And the third day I shall rise again'—I know, I know——"

He drew Yanek down to him and whispered: "Listen, Yanek. Christina says that it is sacrilege. You may crucify the truth, but it will rise again, and on the Day of Judgment we will all rise and sing '*Hey Slovane.*'"

Yanek begged his friend not to speak again, and for more than one reason he was glad that just then Christina entered the room. She came daily at that hour to make

order out of the chaos which the doctor always left. She prepared a cooling drink for the patient and bathed his forehead.

Yes, Yanek might get the fresh water if he wished.

"*Mater Dolorosa*," that is what the schoolmaster always called her; "do you know the last time you sent him to fetch water for me?"

She stopped for a moment and pretended to think; though the incident flashed into her mind instantly. It was in the tree school, as the nursery was called, where the schoolmaster performed those miracles of grafting and planting. Where he made fine Royal pears grow on the trees which formerly bore a fruit appropriately called "*Nyihlitchky*," Little Rotters, because they were so hard that they were eatable only when they were partially decayed.

Yes, she remembered, and now Royal pears and big apples and sweet cherries were blessing the valley; but after all the real miracle he worked was with boys and girls.

"Look at Yanek," and then her face flushed and the schoolmaster didn't like that a bit, for there was a great passion in his heart, growing daily—a holy passion, he said to himself; for was he not twelve years her senior and just out of prison, with a broken body, and was she not his *Mater Dolorosa*?

"Yanek is all right," he said, Christina having encouraged him to express his opinion; "but no longer a Slovak at heart. They have starched him over there until he is stiff, like the glossy collar he wears, and he is religious, yet I fear his religion is weak and yielding. He took a verbal beating from the doctor without resisting. I fear he is like *Babushka* and you, and that he will talk to me about the dear *Jeshzitshek* and will want to convert me."

Christina had finished her womanly little touches about the room, and going to his side she took both his hands in hers, and, looking full into his eyes, while he looked steadily into hers: "Schoolmaster," she said, "would to God you were converted. You need the peace of God in your heart."

"Yes," he thought, "if this is the peace of God I need it; and if this is conversion, this yielding myself to your touch, then I want to be converted. Do with me what you will."

Yanek entered at that moment, carrying the water, and as he saw them thus, hand in hand, a thought flashed through his mind, a thought which became a conviction as he saw how tenderly Christina bathed the teacher's brow and with what a supreme content he accepted her ministrations. Both men felt her to be something more than mere woman, and both knew they loved her with a passion which received its glow from her own radiance.

The nurse came to stay through the night, and Yanek said he would walk home with Christina. The schoolmaster told them that he was feeling better; how could he help it? And he was also feeling worse, though of course he did not say so, and how could he help that? He sighed deeply; for the room looked strangely dark as they passed out.



## CHAPTER EIGHT: THE BEETERS

**I**T was a crisp autumn morning, just the kind of morning to go hunting. So thought Sanctus Spiritus and Company, individually and collectively. Father Anton Kalman thought so when he got up, remembering a stormy session he had with his curate the night before. The curate came in late, later than usual, his step not any too steady, and he was singing a tune which was not in the Hymnal of the church. One word led to another and finally the younger man threatened to report his superior to the bishop for discouraging patriotic utterances in the pulpit.

Through storm and stress of many years Father Kalman had kept his church a place where man could meet his God through the Holy Sacraments. "Our priest does not preach," his people used to say, "he just talks to us like a father to his children, and sometimes he talks to us as if we were naughty children."

Now this new display of eloquence, this making the pulpit rather than the altar the center of the service, he didn't like.

His curate accused him of jealousy, and perhaps justly. Father Anton Kalman was, after all, human, and it takes a great deal of grace to be put aside and not feel it; but the dear Lord was helping him even as He helped Samuel when the people looked upon Saul as their king. He thought he must pray the more, and he did.

He slept little that night after the scene with the curate, and he was not much comforted in his prayer. He had said early mass, the curate being indisposed, and

now he thought it would do him good to spend the day in the *Bashanyitza*.

Strange to say Moritz Redlich thought the same thing, for he too had passed a sleepless night. "What does Anton know about trouble?" he soliloquized. "He is a Holy Father and I am a real father. 'Children are as arrows. Happy is the man who hath his quiver full of them.' King David was right, they are as arrows, but how can one be happy if the arrows fly into his own heart? Oy, oy!" he lamented. "Children are arrows indeed! There is Sandor, and that poor, ailing baby. Hm! Hm! What does the Holy Father know about children?"

Sophie was not any too well, and his home had become bedlam. In the morning Hannak the music teacher comes, usually the worse for liquor, and then there is such a beating of the piano that it is no wonder the child is nervous. Then the Fräulein comes and she is worse than Hannak; he is at least honest; poor, drunken fool. But the Fräulein, with her small, shifty eyes which seem to be everywhere at once, he cannot tolerate. She stays till noon, and when she is not retailing all the scandal of two continents, or is not slandering somebody, she is singing. God deliver him from such singing.

And then his wife, sitting in her imported rocking chair, manicuring her finger nails or reading novels. Always some man with her, more often two. Now it is Kukulish and Herr Ritter, rivals for her smiles. There was not much choice between them he thought, except that he despised the one and hated the other. Kukulish follows her like a dog, and she follows Ritter like a dog.

Would to God they had never brought that fellow into his life! He was to blame for the big project and the new sign. That new sign had haunted him all night. Moritz Redlich hanging by a rope! He was afraid he

was going crazy, and the only way he seemed to be able to save himself was to act like that foolish American who buttoned and unbuttoned his coat, and kept saying that everything was *fine* in America. He was saying that this morning, just as he felt the gloomy mood coming upon him. "It is fine in America!" Then it flashed into his mind, it is a fine day to go hunting.

Pan Yan Szenitzky also was not any too happy that morning. The Judge called on him the night before, and showed him a formidable document which had come from Budapest. The Pan had insulted His Excellency by telling him to go to the devil with his offer of a Baronetcy.

"I was merely quoting Scripture," replied the Pan; to which the Judge retorted that he would quote to him paragraphs 10 and 20 from statute 347, and what is Scripture against such authority? He had insulted a cabinet member and unless he apologized he would have to take the consequences.

That was not the only thing which had gone wrong. Sonya had introduced Yanek at the Athletic Club without asking his leave, and he had beaten the young Baron Smertzing at tennis. It was the Baron who had introduced the game, and had taught everybody. He was the patron saint of the sport, and now he had been beaten by a coachman's son, and how ingloriously beaten. He lost his temper and insulted Yanek, and when Christina heard of it she took her sister to task.

Sonya laughed at her for taking the matter so seriously, and told her she had no sense of humor. It was delightful to see Yanek beat the Baron and take the conceit out of the fop. If only when the cad insulted him, he had obliterated some of the boundary marks of the tennis court with the fellow instead of going away, she would have kissed him then and there.



Christina lost her temper and wouldn't come to prayers after supper, and the evening was doubly spoiled for the Pan.

This morning when he woke he was still perplexed as to what he should do about His Excellency. Hoping to clarify his thought in the open country, he too said: "it is a fine day for hunting," and so it was that Sanctus Spiritus and Company met on the corner where they always met. With their guns over their shoulders and their luncheon in their leather pouches, they marched through the *Esplanade*, then across the field by the ruins of the little Hussite chapel to the pine woods, called the *Bashanyitza*.

"It drives the cobwebs out of one's brains," Father Kalman said, and by cobwebs he meant the curate.

Moritz Redlich did not cough nearly so much, and Pan Yan Szenitzky smoked one pipeful to its very end, after having lighted it with only one match.

It was a glorious morning. On every ribboned field they saw the workers, pulling cabbages, or plowing for the winter crops, chatting or singing. The men doffed their caps as the trio passed, and replied to the "*Pomohiy Pan Boch*" with the friendly "*Pan Boch Deiy*." Yes, indeed, they had God's help. How else could they be so happy? They were working with God. Chaffing and singing and working, without worry.

"It is a wonderful world," Father Kalman said, as he looked over the fields toward the mountains, their heads peeping above the mist as if they too were eager to forget their troubles. Nevertheless, the priest thought, it would be more wonderful without that curate to bother him; that was still like the mist around his heart.

Moritz Redlich echoed his words as he looked at the roads lined by heavy laden, blue plum trees, the ripe fruit covering the ground as if the very sky had fallen.



How much lovelier it would be, though, if—ah, there were so many ifs, and the chief if was, if he could still make plum brandy and never have to bother with stocks, and if the Herr Ritter were back in Germany, and Gittele were still alive.

Pan Yan Szenitzky, ever the non-conformist, thought it a rather pleasant day, and inwardly he said, how much pleasanter it would be if the devil would take His Excellency, and if Yanek had stayed over in America, and so would not have beaten the Baron at tennis, and if it were not for sugar beets.

Nothing is perfect in this world, not even that rare day, when the three old men might have agreed upon at least one thing; that it was a perfect day. They did not shoot anything, they did not expect to. It was commonly rumored that they never took any ammunition, and that the pheasants, knowing it, would run under their feet like chickens; so that did not spoil the day.

In the heart of the woods they ate their luncheon. Moritz Redlich had brought the usual roast goose. He always brought ample portions, because his *confrères* could eat what he brought, though he could not eat their food. Father Anton Kalman was fond of the drumstick, so fond of it that he used to say he wished every goose had four of them.

Pan Yan Szenitzky liked goose liver. He always said, when he spread it thick upon a piece of rye bread, "Moses made it easy for you Jews to forego pork. No pig can beat a goose for liver."

They could drink wine together, fortunately, and that Father Kalman supplied; for there was a deep, cool cellar under the parsonage, and his predecessors were like Joseph. They had foreseen the lean years and had provided bountifully for them.

The afternoon was as pleasant as the morning, though

it was growing cool as the sun began to touch the mountains. They had not had much conversation, so no serious disagreements developed; although the Pan insisted that Hunyadi water was a fraud, and that it was just plain water with Glauber salts. Father Anton defended Hunyadi, and Moritz Redlich believed in the hot baths, and hoped he would live at least another season, so that he could get to Poestyan and have the rheumatism boiled out of him. Nevertheless even that perfect day was not to end happily for three men who faced so many ifs, as the sun went down.

The Reverend Yanek Hruby also thought this a fine day as had some other people who helped spoil it for Sanctus Spiritus and Company. He too had had a bad night of it. Of course he went to play tennis with Sonya though he had determined not to go. He was sure he would not that evening when he walked home with Christina from the schoolmaster's. They stopped under the acacia tree and recalled the many spring times when they sucked honey from the locust blossoms which he had brought down with such well aimed stones. When they passed the swimming hole they spoke of the first tragedy they had witnessed, the drowning of a shoemaker's apprentice. It was Yanek who pulled him out of the water, and together they tried to resuscitate him, kneeling beside the wet little body. Christina was severely punished for coming home with her summer frock all spoiled by the wet mud, and she was ashamed to tell where she had been and what she had done.

They walked together over the narrow bridge, so close, that he was thrilled by her nearness to him. The haze over the river wrapt the willows in fantastic draperies and they talked of the witch stories they had heard the peasants tell, and the whistles Yanek made for her from

those very trees. He experienced that mysticism for which he had vainly longed in his devotion to God, and his body, mind and soul blended with hers.

He confessed to her his irresolution. Face to face as he was with his life's task, he felt that he had no message for his people who had been thrown into the welter of nationalism. Then she became *his* Mater Dolorosa, the mother of this boy who understood everything about himself except that he was just as irresolute about another, all absorbing passion. He needed her help, a word from her, a warmer touch of her hand, a different look in her eyes. He did not know that she was as undecided as he, and as ready to yield herself to him had he been more determined.

So they walked side by side, yet far apart, talking of the great aspirations which filled their souls but not their hearts. There seemed to be another opportunity for self-revelation when they came to the river gate of the Pan's garden. There, childhood memories crowded upon them both. Many and many a time he had climbed over the wall just at that point to fetch the ball with which they were playing and which had escaped them.

"Christina, I am going to fetch your ball!" he cried, and before she knew it, he was on top of the glass sprinkled, adobe wall. As chance or fate would have it, on the other side of the wall was Sonya, her hair blown by the wind, her bare arms upraised, for she was playing tennis with one of her many admirers. She leveled her racket at the intruder crying: "Halt, apple thief! Surrender or I shoot!" And though he did not jump into the garden, but opened the gate for Christina, and let her in, and though they walked toward the house together, and though when they passed the pigeon loft his heart beat faster, he wondered if he *had* surrendered to Sonya.



The next day she was to introduce him at the Athletic Club. His mother pressed his white trousers for him, and when he had put on his flannel shirt, tilted his collar, college boy fashion, and tied a handkerchief over his forehead, he looked at himself in the mirror and was satisfied that even the Baron could look no better. His mother enthusiastically admired him and when he met Sonya, she told him he looked like a Greek god. He carried her racket, and they created an undeniable sensation when they appeared at the Athletic Club.

The Baroness was there, and she put up her lorgnette and, after scrutinizing him, pronounced him *chic*. Madam Czerny the apothecary's wife leveled her kodak at him, and the men knew they had a rival.

They had played a set of doubles, he and Sonya being partners; and though she played poorly and he did not exert himself, they won by a close margin. Baron Ferencz Smertzing appeared while the game was in progress. He was told who the guest was, and made no effort to conceal his displeasure. It was Sonya who insisted that the two men play single, and she was supported by the other ladies who enjoyed seeing the agile movements of the bronzed, muscular young American.

"He looks like an Indian chief," the Baroness kept saying, and she was right, though she had not the slightest idea what an Indian chief looked like.

Baron Smertzing knew how to play tennis. He had learned that and many other things in England. However, he was no match for this young athlete, who not only knew the game, but whose body was unweakened by excesses. Like a stone from a sling, the balls came flying over the net, and it was always a love game when Yanek served. The spectators had crowded close, and while the Baron succeeded in making points, he knew he was ingloriously doomed to defeat. He heard the



ladies' ejaculations. Sonya was dancing in glee, and then he lost his temper.

Having failed to strike, at the first bound, a ball which he was returning to the server, Yanek was about to hit it at the second bound when the Baron clucked his tongue, and called out: "Git up, horsey! Hit, Ho!"

Then it was all over. Yanek dropped his racket. His face grew pale, he compressed his lips and bit his tongue to restrain himself, then wheeled around and walked away. That is the way it happened that the next morning *he* thought it was a fine day to go walking in the woods.

At the edge of the *Bashanyitza* he saw the Redlich carriage and Andrew Feher smoking his short pipe while trying to hold his restless horses. Yanek entered the woods for healing and forgetfulness, and he emerged from them more disturbed than before; for he had seen the Madam and Herr Ritter there together. Evidently they had also thought that it was a fine day to go to the woods.

The obtrusion of sex into Yanek's own life, the problem of keeping dominant the spiritual motive, his inability to marshal those forces which he needed to save himself, made him strangely lenient in his judgment of the guilty pair. Had he been what he thought he was, he might have stepped between them accusingly, like an angel of justice. Now he stole away and was glad that he had not disturbed them in their amorous embrace.

As he stepped out of the woods he saw the far stretching beet fields of the Sugar Trust and he breathed more easily, watching the beeters at their task. All of them were bending to Mother Earth, garnering her fruits. The young women were pulling the beets, the older ones and the children sat around in huge circles, cutting off the tops and tossing them into great heaps, and the men

shoveled them into the carts. The white, long horned cattle chewing their cud, perfected this picture of peace. Yanek began playing with the children, and when he took one of the unruly infants in his arms and quieted it with a well remembered lullaby, the women smiled at him and told him he was evidently well prepared to take care of his own. "May the *Pan Boch* grant him a great many of them."

"Yes, the Slovak women have a hard life," the mother of the baby said to him. "What with bearing a child every year, working out in the field and cooking the meals, no wonder they grow old soon; but the *Pan Boch* helps." Yes, the *Pan Boch*! thought Yanek. What would they do without the consolation of the Lord's presence? And if the Lord is everywhere, why should He not be here in this beet field with these humble people? There were some coarse jests at his expense, which made him blush, the young women cast sheepish glances at him, and they did many things which were indelicate, to say the least; but they were working, honestly working, and when he heard the drivers coaxing their oxen with "hit" and "hoe," he thought of yesterday, and was doubly ashamed of himself for having grown angry at the Baron's taunt.

After all, this was where he belonged, among his own people, and he pulled off his coat, relieved himself of his stiff collar and began shoveling beets. He had learned something besides playing tennis in America, he had learned how to handle a shovel scientifically. He gave it a shove and a twist, such as the miners use in loading coal; he hurled the beets through the air and never one fell on the ground.

He held the shovel differently from the way the peasants held theirs, and the beets just tumbled into it. He crouched for a moment, then straightened his body,

and lifted the shovel to the level of the wagon at the same time, and before they knew it, the shovel was on the ground again ready for another toss.

The old men shook their heads and said: "*Tak, tak!*" The young men were bathed in perspiration trying to keep up with him, and Kuby Fish, the Jewish overseer, stood, fascinated by the magic of his performance, saying over and over: "The Americans are so *praktisch!*"

The women did not compare him to Greek gods or Indian chiefs, but they said: "*On roby yak maschina.*" He works like a machine. They shared their frugal meal with him. "This is our music," one of the peasants said, as he cut huge slices from their loaves of rye bread, the knife scraping its way through the hard crust.

"This is food for the stomach, perfume for the nose, and something good for the eye, too," another one said laughingly, as he cut an onion and ate it with a relish. What would the poor of the world do without their onions? The Slavs have even built their church steeples *a là Zwibula*, and some day a poet of the people will immortalize it.

"This is our strength," and they drank the *Palenka*, the one thing the Sugar Trust provided. Not too much, to make them drunk; just enough to make them stupidly contented. When Yanek suggested to Kuby Fish that these workers deserved better treatment, he replied, "They are only pigs." He looked at them as they sat around waiting for the signal to return to their work. The majority of them looked stupid; the higher life in them was unawakened and never would come to being. The boys and girls were handsome; but in thought, speech and gesture, unclean. It was sex which dominated their lives, crushing and crowding out better things. After all, the curse of poverty was not the inequality of it, but the iniquity; that they were indeed made into pigs,



and had no chance to be anything else; yet, he reflected, are the rich, the very rich, any better than pigs? And he thought of his experience in the woods. What were Madam Redlich and the Herr Ritter but pigs? They ate from cleaner troughs, and were a little more discreet in their immorality; still they were pigs.

He saw a group of beeters gathered around one of the men who was reading to them. He had noticed them before and wondered what made them seem different. They were from the same region, for they wore the same picturesque clothes and spoke the same Slovak dialect. The foreman did not offer them any *Palenka* and he asked him the reason. Kuby Fish touched his forehead to indicate that they were insane.

"They have got a new religion. They drink no *Palenka*, eat no meat and say they will not kill, and their women have no children till they are married," he added with a coarse laugh.

Yanek joined them and found that it was their elder who was reading to them. He listened to the man, who was slowly and painfully reading from the fifth chapter of Matthew.

No, not even Kuby Fish could call these people pigs, though he might call them insane. In them stupidity had become single mindedness, and their lives were turned toward a holy aspiration. What made the difference? A very simple and yet a very profound thing. They had a rule of life, the wise would call it a philosophy.

"Yes brother," the *Starosta* answered; "We drink no alcohol, take no oath, we will not fight, we live in chastity, and we are waiting for the coming of our Lord."

Yanek knew exactly what his professor of Exegesis would have said to the man. He would have told him that he was a literalist, which of course the old man could



not have understood, and that the Lord is always coming, which he also could not have understood. What the professor could not have denied, was, that these people were just such simple folk as followed the Lord when He was upon the Earth, and that they stood out from their group like men aflame from God, which could not be said of himself, or of the people in that church in America, who were so eager to send him to convert his countrymen.

Where did they get their faith?

"That is a long story," the old man replied; but he could tell him so much, that a man came back from America, and gathered them together. They were all addicted to alcohol, they beat their wives, they lived in unchastity, and they were unlettered. He read to them out of the book where Jesus speaks, and then he talked to them. He talked to them as no minister ever had spoken to them. He spoke with tongues as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, and some of them felt His presence so that they too began to speak, though they had never spoken of holy things before. "Upon me too, the Holy Spirit descended."

Yanek rememebered the rules of Homiletics, all his firstlies and lastlies; all the fine balancing of truth upon the needle point of a text, the hours and hours which he spent in determining who wrote this or that part of the book of Isaiah, and now after it all, his confusion of mind, his lack of purpose, his inner discord. And here he heard of a man who had come from this same America, with nothing but a living faith, a real program and a hope, and he had wrought this great miracle. For it was a miracle, though he might go to his William James "Varieties of Religious Experience," and have the whole thing explained by him to a T.

It would have been a "fine" day indeed, if this thing

had not happened, and if still other things were not to happen both to him and to Sanctus Spiritus and Company who were just emerging from the *Bashanyitza*. Moritz Redlich was coughing harder than usual, and why shouldn't he? It was such a "fine" day, till by sheer chance they saw the Herr Ritter coming from the woods, mounting his horse which was tied at the edge of the forest. Then they heard the trampling of horses and the Redlich carriage with the Madam rolled past them.

The three old men were walking slowly back toward town, and when they came to the beet field they found the workers in a riot.

Lindner's omnibus had driven by, full of Americans who had been celebrating their return to the homeland by imbibing so freely, that they had reached the happy mood in which they felt generous toward the whole world and wanted everybody to be as happy as they were. They had brought out flasks of *Palenka* to the beeters, and had no difficulty in luring them from their work. Kuby Fish strenuously objected and threatened them with the gendarmes.

Did he know who they were? They were Americans, free Americans, and he and his gendarmes could go to the devil if they wanted to. All the beeters must stop work and drink, and all of them did, except the "Salvesh," the crazy men who had a religion which forbade them to drink *Palenka*. They were led to the omnibus, and did not resist until the "Americans" tried to pour the *Palenka* down their throats. Was it fortunate or unfortunate that Yanek was not a literalist, and that he had been taught not to take the Sermon on the Mount too seriously?

He jumped between the men and their tormentors, his shovel lifted above the heads of the drunken Americans,

and threatened to brain them if they would not let the beeters go.

It wasn't the sight of the shovel which cowed them, but the fact that he spoke English to them, that Greek had met Greek, or rather that American had met American. They meant no harm, but as American Slovaks they did not want their fellow countrymen to fare like pigs, and they had come out to treat them.

The fellow who was the spokesman of the group, and who used very lurid English, learned at the mouth of the minepit, then turned and began to harangue his countrymen as he had harangued the workmen at the brewery a few days before, and it was at that moment that Sanctus Spiritus and Company passed the field.

"In America it is fine!" the man shouted. "You can get six times the wages, and have whisky by the barrel and beer by the hogshead; and here you are working for a pittance, and for whom? For Jews and Magyars who eat roast goose and drink wine while you eat the peelings of potatoes, and praise God if you get a swig of *Palenka* once a day." He showed them his "fine suit." "Look at it," he said, "and compare it with your coarse trousers and your shirt. You haven't even the comfort of knowing when a flea bites you, for it is scratch, scratch, from morning till evening.

"Look at my fine watch, and you have only the sun as your clock, and at night you can't see it. Look at my fountain pen, it's full of ink, and the point is of gold, and at the tip there is a diamond, and you can't even scratch your names with a slate pencil. Look at the fine gold in my teeth; it cost me over a hundred dollars to have it hammered in, and you men of my age are chewing your food if you have any, on your gums.

"In America when the boss does not give us enough money we go to his office and say: 'Give us more money

or we will strike,' and if the money does not come, we strike, and throw stones, and break up the machinery till the boss gives us what we want.

"You are just like the oxen, only not so well off for they have their cud to chew, and you have nothing; they have a nice warm stable, and you will sleep to-night out in the miserable lousy barracks. In America we would set fire to the rat hole."

The combination of *Palenka*, the display of fine clothes and gold filled teeth, the eloquence of the tipsy man were too much for their peaceful Slovak blood, and the beeters broke their wooden shovels, loosened the oxen and marched into town, carrying Yanek and the "Salvesh" with them.

Pan Yan Szenitzky's matches would not light and his *Dresdenska* would not draw, though he puffed away at it as if he had the asthma. How could they function when the world was growing worse and worse, with sugar beets and immigration all tangled up, and Yanek, Hruby's Yanek, among the beeters who had left their work before the sun was down?



## CHAPTER NINE: THE FIRST "SCHKANDAL"

"THE FRÄULEIN" had come to give Sophie her singing lesson but Sophie was not as well as usual, and excused herself from the ordeal. Madam had the migraine. She was sitting in her flowered easy chair, her hair disheveled. There were black circles around her eyes, the wrinkles which she had so artfully concealed seemed to have been carved into her face overnight, and she was nervously manicuring her finger nails, though she never glanced at them. Both she and Sophie would have been glad if the Fräulein had not removed her hat and, sitting down, asked whether they had heard about the big *schkandal*. Scandals were the Fräulein's specialty, and when no scandal happened, she invented one. The small ones she embellished, and the big ones she nourished with a mother's tender care; and she told them all with the same gusto with which she ate *paprika* chicken which was her favorite dish.

Dr. Makutchky called her the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and he had rightly named her, for she was a racial compound in which Slav, Roumanian, German and Magyar blood strains had remained as unassimilated and as constantly at war with one another, as in that political body.

In a country where there was talent "to burn" and no character to spare, where, though people were kind hearted, one's word and one's bond were equally worthless; where they kissed each other's hands at the least provocation and vigorously kicked when one's back was turned; where it was bad form to forget your friend's name's day or birthday, and where bills were sent by

registered mail lest their arrival be denied—in such a country Fräulein Ilonka Lomatch, or just "the Fräulein" as she was always called, was true to the type; except that she was what did not always happen, a good deal better in some things and infinitely worse in others.

Her family had sacrificed itself upon the altar of her musical education, and her zenith was reached when a musical critic (for a consideration) mentioned her name with that of the great Materna. She came to the United States on the strength of that press notice, and "would have been engaged to sing at the Metropolitan Opera House, had not the conductor, who was in love with the leading soprano, purposely thrown her off the key, and so ruined her prospects."

She then went on a concert tour and sang only once, because (she said) her impressario "made indecent demands" of her, and she promptly resigned. After that she gave no account of her life, until turning her back upon the New World she returned to her native country neither sadder nor wiser, not even richer, with a smattering of English and the glory of having sung in the Metropolitan Opera.

Yes, "*meine Gnaedige*," she had settled herself at her favorite occupation. "Such a *schkandal*! It was terrible! About this Meester Hruby. Fräulein Christina is broken hearted! To think of it! Such a *schkandal*! And for him to get mixed up with these *Kopanyitchary*. I told you *meine Gnaedige* that he had it thick behind the ears.

"They came marching back from the field and he had a wench clinging to each arm! Yes, this pious Meester Hruby, and they went to the sugar factory and there they began breaking the windows and when the gendarmes came they threw stones at them, and now they got what's coming to them. The Meester Hruby is in jail. The

Herr Baron says he is an anarchist and he will see to it that the country is delivered from this American pest."

The *Gnaedige* Madam Redlich was greatly relieved; for the Fräulein seemed to know nothing of the *schkandal* in which she was involved. In that she was mistaken. The Fräulein knew all about it and some things which the *Gnaedige* herself did not know.

"Did the *Frau Gnaedige* know that there was a *schkandal* in the Casino? Yes, indeed there was. The Herr Ritter was playing billiards and the postmaster came up and called him names, and the Herr Ritter merely told him to get out of his way, the nice, kind Herr Ritter!" The Fräulein was watching the *Gnaedige* with her swift, shifting glance which one could feel but not see.

"And then," she continued, now fixing her eyes on the *Gnaedige*, "the postmaster wrested the billiard cue from the Herr Ritter's hand and broke it over his head, and now there is to be an American duel."

Madam Redlich had risen from her chair and the manicure set with which she had been busily engaged dropped from her lap. Her face had grown pale and her lip was quivering.

"*Aber, Gnaedige*, don't get excited. An American duel is not so bad. Both the men can not get hurt. The one who draws the black ball, he dies, it is very simple." It was simple enough for the Fräulein to contemplate, just another *schkandal* in the making; but it was not so simple for Madam Redlich. Never had her flirtations had such dramatic consequences.

Her husband had indulged her from the first. He was an old man and she was full of life. She craved excitement, and this snaring of men and letting them go, was the only way in which she could satisfy her desire. There

was a long succession of them and nothing serious had happened till the Herr Ritter came.

Her husband did not like him from the first, and she thought it her duty to be kind to him. Such a man buried here in Hraszova! What a pity! So there were afternoon coffees, and he played the piano divinely, and read poetry to her, which stimulated her romantic mood; and her husband's opposition made her only the more attentive to the poor Herr Ritter.

Of course, there was Kukulish. Kukulish was the only one of all her admirers who had a strain of sincerity in him. He had clung to her, had brought her flowers and talked to her in his stupid way, and never demanded anything but to sit in the parlor and smoke his *Cubana* and look at her. She had no dog and he answered the purpose; though like a dog he followed the scent, and over and over again when Herr Ritter least expected it, the postmaster appeared and broke the magic spell he had woven around the Madam.

This one time he had come too late. In his silent, sullen way, he looked at them in the *Bashanyitza*; then he spat into the Herr Ritter's face and walked away.

"Yes, it was all very simple for the Fräulein, but not for the Madam. If her husband only would have scolded her or driven her from the house, she could have stood all that; but that night he did not go to bed; just walked up and down in the chilly room, coughing and moaning, and every once in a while he would come to her bed and glare at her, and his face would grow red and he would shake his fist at her. She wanted to say to him, "Strike me, strike me hard, that is what I deserve!" But she feared he had lost his mind, for he would break out into laughter and button and unbutton his coat and say: "Yes, in America it is fine! Look at my fine watch, look at the gold in my teeth, yes, it is fine!" And then he would



walk up and down again, and swing his arms and mutter to himself. At last he threw himself upon the bed and began to cry like a child. The bed shook under his agony of grief, and she drew him to her and put her arms around him and wept with him. Moritz had a golden heart, a golden, Jewish heart.

As he lay there in her arms still sobbing, he felt that he was the kinsman of the Prophet Hosea, who discovered the love in the heart of Jehovah, by his anguished love for Gomer the daughter of Giblaim, who turned harlot and could not be weaned from her harlotry. If he was like Hosea, she was like Gomer, and her repentance did not last; for her "goodness was as a morning cloud and as the dew that goeth early away."

No, it was not so simple as the Fräulein said it was, this great *schkandal* in the Casino. Stripped of its exaggeration there was still enough truth left in the narrative to make Madam Redlich feel that life was a very complex matter.

To Yanek Hruby life seemed exceedingly perplexing when that morning he stood before the Judge, accused of inciting to riot. Not that he believed less in the Divine leading; it was the direction of which he was not quite so sure. It had been easy enough for his teachers to say: "Here we have snatched a brand from the burning, a promising young foreigner. We have converted him, have given him a college education, and then made him a minister of the Gospel by teaching him the alphabet of sacred tongues, taking him through semi-arid stretches of theology, acquainting him with the millinery of the bride of Christ, the church, and now he is to go out and preach the simple Gospel to his people."

It is only fair to Yanek to say that he had glimpses of the huge problem in that "simple" program of saving a part of the world; but it was like the entertainment

provided by one of his professors, who took the visiting student on a journey through the world, with a stereoscope. In a soft easy chair, in a comfortable if not luxurious parlor, he viewed mountains he would never climb, rivers he would never cross, and sailed over oceans whose storms would never hinder his ship.

He had been swept along with the striking peasants, and he was neither courageous nor cowardly enough to leave them. He hoped that the good Lord, looking down upon him, believed it to be all courage.

The loosened oxen shook themselves as if they thought it too good to be true that their yokes had been taken from them before sundown; then they promptly attacked the sugar beets which they had helped to produce and had never enjoyed. In this course of action they proved themselves thoroughly converted to the revolutionary doctrine preached by the Americans.

Kuby Fish, however, faithful servant of capitalism, succeeded in driving them off, but in so doing stampeded them. They had quite forgotten that they could run, but when they realized that there was no heavy load behind them, they swung down the road at a moderate trot which increased in momentum as they went down hill. By the time they reached the *Esplanade*, they were an irresistible mass, putting the promenaders to flight.

Fortunately, when the animals reached the market place wrapped in a cloud of dust, only their white horns rising above it, some wise master of stupid oxen shouted; "Whoa!" The maddening rush ceased, and they wended their way peacefully to the sugar factory as though nothing unusual had happened. Long before sundown they were locked into their stalls, gratefully pulling hay from the swinging mangers.

Behind the oxen came the marching beeters. They did not sing, or keep step. They did not know where or why

they were marching, but they knew that they were free. The drunken Americans had driven away in Lindner's omnibus, and the "Salvesh," the "crazy" fellows who refused to drink *Palenka* were scattered through the marching mass but had no steadying influence.

Before the beeters reached the *Esplanade*, Yanek noticed, to his dismay, that the men were picking up rocks. Then for the first time, something heroic in him broke through his timid indecision.

He stepped out of the gray, forward moving cloud and began to appeal to the men to drop the rocks; but they kept on, not hearing or heeding him. As he saw the stronger men moving to the front and the women and older men dropping to the rear, it flashed through his mind how, on the athletic field, he had seen order brought out of chaos.

He ran ahead, jumped on to one of the benches and began swinging his arms and at the same time he sang one of the workers' chants, which fortunately he had not forgotten. To his

"Hey zippy zippy zip—  
Hey peasant zippy zip—  
Foamy beer and wheaten cakes  
Hey zippy zippy zip—"

the formless mass began to march in step. When it was in full swing he called a peremptory "Halt!" The marchers responded like a runaway wagon to the sudden brake.

"Drop your stones!" he called out, and one by one the tense fists were opened.

Swinging his arms again, like the much envied yell master during a football game, he soon had them singing and marching toward the sugar factory.

News of the strike had come to the authorities long before the beeters reached town, and they walked into the factory yard between rows of gendarmes. Like the oxen before them they were driven into their barracks and the heavy doors were locked after them;—but there were no hayracks to quiet them, and pandemonium broke loose.

It wasn't freedom they wanted, but "*Chleb*"—bread. It seemed to Yanek that the whole town must hear their piercing screams, but no one appeared.

The women began to cry, frightened now as well as hungry. The men turned on Yanek—"Why did he tell them to drop the stones? What business was it of his anyway?"

He would have suffered violence had not the leader of the "Salvesh" the gentle, wrinkled, *Starychek* pushed him into a dark corner. His adherents surrounded Yanek, and the old man began pleading with the angry beeters not to hurt the man who had saved them all from a worse fate.

It was dark before the keys were turned again, and through the opened door Kuby Fish appeared. Cursing them, he told them that in spite of their disobedience, the usual soup and bread would be served them.

As long as Yanek lived he remembered with horror that night, the longest night he ever lived, the worst and the best. The food had quieted the peasants, and one by one they stretched out on the floor, removing only their boots;—men and women,—young and old, together.

The old men were soon asleep—but the young men! Yes, indeed, they were just pigs. Kuby Fish was right; but woe unto those who made them what they were! All the feelings to which Yanek had been more than a stranger surged through him. Indeed the men were right. What business was it of his to quiet their tumult?



Why should they not throw stones? What else but brute force would avail? He prayed for some supernatural power, some miracle working gift by which he could change the wisps of straw on which he lay, into cold steel, or the piece of heavy, soggy bread, which he could not eat, into a bomb.

Of what avail was their pious talk in the seminary, about the conquering love of God? How weak, and impotent, and bloodless the Christ now seemed to him—the Christ they had urged upon him and whose leadership he had accepted. What idle babbling it was—this turning of the “other cheek.”

Out of the dark a hand came groping toward him—a large, coarse hand, yet the hand of a woman, hungry for a caress, and he was in the mood to respond to it. Nearer and nearer she drew, and then—was it God’s leading—was it that vast, world filling force stooping to him again? How could he ever doubt it, when again and again it directed, almost forced him out of the way in which he was determined to go? It may have been chance, pure blind chance, that just then the *Starychek* lighted a tallow candle, and as Yanek looked into the face of the woman beside him, as he saw by the gleam of the candle, the evil light in her eyes, the feeling of revulsion came.

God had saved him! Yet it was a terrible night, an unforgettable night. It was the first time in his life that he was cursed by a woman.

He moved over to the huddled groups of the “Salvesh.” The *Starychek* had put the candle on the floor and began to read again, slowly and falteringly, from the Gospels. Jesus was speaking against the law, against tradition and customs. Jesus in His authoritative, dry, cold, heartsearching way, putting His finger on the source of evil and revealing the Holy of Holies within each man. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of

old time"—(and it did not matter to Him *who* said it) "but *I* say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."

Yanek had heard that before, he had read it himself, out of big, dignified pulpit Bibles, and out of little, smugly bound, limp leather, rice paper Testaments. He had heard sermons preached on those texts, properly diluted, skillfully dissected. He had never heard them from lips which believed it all and which accepted the uncompromising "But *I* say unto you" as the law of conduct. The *Starychek* had closed the book and began to speak to them.

"The Christ has conquered the world and has served it, because He suffered and did not complain. He suffered with love and joy.

"We have sinned in our hearts to-day because we have given room to anger. We must repent of our sins. We must do our hard work with love, and suffer without complaint. Work is necessary. We must do that which is good and abstain from that which is evil. We must speak kindly words and overcome evil with good.

"We are doing only small things, but from the mustard seed grows the big tree—the big tree of love whose branches will shade the world. May God aid us in being faithful to Him in moments of temptation, when we face our enemies or our friends, when we are full or when we are empty. Then it will be well for us, and it will be well for everybody. Now let us pray in our hearts."

No doubt some of them prayed—Yanek prayed, he was sure of that. For the first time in his life he had the feeling that some Holy Presence filled him, and though his lips did not move, he knew he was praying.

## CHAPTER TEN: THE TRIAL

THE morning came none too soon and he greeted eagerly every sign of its coming, for the air in the barracks was stifling. When the dawn stole in through the narrow windows and the sleepers awoke, those who did not look angrily at him and curse him, made coarse jests at his expense, coupling his name with that of the woman who had spent the night close to him.

In the adjoining barns the oxen were being fed and yoked again, and then to every one's relief the doors of the barracks were opened. Cauldrons of hot soup and loaves of bread were brought in, and these together with the *Palenka* which was served in unusually generous quantities, made them forget the ills of yesterday. Some one was calling the roll, and soon he heard the beeters marching away to their work, following the patient oxen, and singing as usual.

When Yanek's name was called, he inwardly resented the fact that no prefix was put to it, but after all he was one of them now, and could not expect anything else. When he reached the door, he faced two gendarmes with a warrant for his arrest. He had half expected that; nevertheless it came to him with a shock; he had to taste the first draught from the martyr's cup, and that draught is always the bitterest. It grows sweeter the more deeply one drinks. He was marched through the streets just the same as any other criminal; the law never takes any chances, and treated him with firmness and determination, as if he had been a dangerous highwayman. A prisoner is a prisoner, and neither the

gendarmes nor the gaping populace made any fine distinctions.

He could stand the jests and slurs cast upon his profession, but he was deeply hurt when the little children shrank from him, seeming more afraid of him than of the gendarmes with their fixed bayonets. The worst of the seemingly interminable journey was the fact that he had to pass the Pan's house. From a distance he saw his mother, and as he came nearer he noticed how shrunken and old she looked. Marisha was standing there, and Pepo and the derelict old men and women of the *hospice* and the little idiotic girl.

Marisha made a face at him and called him a "Sal-vesh." Pepo laughed at that, his hollow, loud laugh which seemed to echo in his brainless head. Yanek was grateful that none of the Pan's people were watching for him; in fact the windows were closed and the curtains drawn. His mother threw herself into his arms unafraid and unashamed, and when the gendarmes tried to separate them, she turned upon them with an animal fierceness which was as much a surprise to him as it was to the guardians of the law.

His father was not so affectionate. He saw his prestige vanished. No chance now that he would hear his son preach, and no matter whether he was guilty of this thing or not, whatever it was, Andrew Feher, always his foe, would have a new and sharper taunt at his disposal. He did not follow his son. He had been commanded by the Pan to harness the horses, come up to the courthouse and wait for orders. He went back to the stable shaking his head, mourning the passing of his reflected glory, and when Martzin the groom told him, that was all one could expect from a boy who stole honeycakes at the fair, he threw a pitchfork at him, narrowly missing his head. The little idiotic child ran after the dreary pro-



cession, hopping like a bird, with her arms extended as if she were flying, making inarticulate sounds which perhaps the birds understood. It was a long and cruel walk up the dusty street. When they passed the Redlich mansion, Mortiz Redlich was just going to the distillery, and he stopped for a moment to ask Yanek whether he was still feeling "fine." His mother quickly enlightened the old man as to the cause of her son's arrest (which he knew), and he began to cough nervously; then instead of going to the office, he turned and walked toward the Catholic Church, disappearing through the door of the parsonage.

The few hours Yanek spent in the jail were made bearable by the fact that it was not a worse place than the barracks, and that Dr. Makutchky appeared, bringing with him an attorney, Dr. Finor. He was one of the few educated Slovaks who had not succumbed to the pressure of the Magyars, and was known as a fearless and just advocate; indeed he was the only legal adviser whom the Slovaks could trust. His clients being poor, he was content with small fees or none, and as Yanek looked into his finely modeled face with its clear and kindly eyes, he knew his cause was in good hands. It was too good an occasion for Dr. Makutchky to let pass without expressing his views about the State, and he did so in his usual vigorous way.

Pan Yan Szenitzky had urgent business that morning at the parsonage, Father Anton Kalman having summoned him, and on the way there he seemed very much agitated and wasted an unusual number of matches in lighting his pipe.

Yanek had never come in contact with the majesty of the law, and had never been in a court room; so when he was ushered in, it affected him in the same way as when one time he had been in an operating room in the hospital,

with one of his friends. The room revolved around him. He saw the Judge, a yellow skinned, pudgy, fiercely mustached man, his small eyes and square face betraying the Asiatic blood which had been nearly bred out of his race by its intermixture with other peoples. But to Yanek he seemed to expand, and he looked like one of those figures distorted by a concave mirror. Yanek thought he heard the swash of the Pan's leather breeches, the nervous cough of Moritz Redlich, and before the court was formally opened, the third member of Sanctus Spiritus and Company was tapping his snuff tobacco box, once, and the tap was followed by a vigorous sneeze. At that moment, had it not been for Dr. Makutchky, the prisoner would have fallen to the ground. Some one brought him a glass of water; he thought it was Christina, but it was his mother's hand he touched.

The majesty of the law! No wonder it needs a pompous setting! How much red tape, how many preambles, what vain repetitions before it is ready to operate; and how many paragraphs this and paragraphs that, have to be read; how it looks back to view the past, and how it closes its eyes to the future!

Yanek felt none of the exaltation which the schoolmaster experienced when he was in a similar predicament. He did not feel above these people, but one of them, with no pride, and a profound pity for all who thought it necessary to pervert the truth and invent lies in order to convict him. One might have thought that the very foundations of the State would tremble and fall unless the defendant were found guilty.

This then was human nature, this venomous, poisonous thing, which he had idealized and believed to be a part of the Divine. A woman appeared on the witness stand and testified that it was he who had given *Palenka* to the beeters, and told them that they were working for

Magyar pigs, and that at night, in the barracks, he had attacked her.

Then something seemed to break within him, and no longer able to control himself, he shouted: "She lies!" His mother rushed at the woman and only the stern command of the Judge to restrain herself kept her from doing the witness bodily injury. The spectators loudly voiced their opinions and the room was in such an uproar that it was with difficulty the court restored order. In the meantime the witnesses for the defense were being brought back from the beet field.

Never before had Stephan Hruby so urged his horses as on that day. When he passed the Redlich home he saw Andrew Feher looking after him, wondering whether the old Slovak had gone mad. The horses themselves must have been reminded of their young days when they needed no urging to keep up such a pace.

The first witness for the defense was the *Starychek*, and he was the only man who took the stand without fear. He held his head erect, and when the court asked him to take the oath he refused. "The Gospel says: 'Thou shalt not forswear thyself.'"

The Judge reminded him that he was face to face with a representative of the Hungarian Government to which he courteously replied that he was also face to face with the Divine Government, and that he "preferred to disobey the court rather than the Almighty."

"Had he ever before refused to obey the court?" He had, upon this same question. Then he had been sent to prison and he was ready to go again. He would take no oath but he would say "Yea, yea, and Nay, nay."

There was a long wrangle between the Judge and Dr. Finor but the court did not permit the *Starychek* to testify.

The next witness had no objection to taking an oath.



Oaths were natural to him; but he was badly frightened by the court, and remembered little or nothing. He was more or less under the influence of liquor and contradicted himself a number of times. The only thing he knew was that a woman cursed the defendant that night, and that they all laughed and joked about it in the morning.

The next witness had a little clearer idea in his head; but he was guarding his own hide; for when he was asked whether he picked up stones without being told to, he replied that he was told to by some one, but he did not quite know who it was. It might have been the defendant.

Matters were not looking especially favorable for Yanek; the court was frankly prejudiced against him. Baron Smertzing as Crown Notary was present, and he passed written slips of paper to His Honor which that worthy frequently consulted as he asked questions. There was a moment of silence after the last witness had been examined, and then there was a sound as of some one knocking on the floor. It was Pan Yan Szenitzky emptying his *Dresdenska*. This was followed by the usual cough proceeding from the direction where Moritz Redlich sat, and then the Reverend Father Anton Kalman solemnly tapped his snuff tobacco box three times; but he did not sneeze. His Reverence had risen and asked the court for the privilege of testifying. He too had no compunctions about oaths on such occasions, and then he tapped his snuff tobacco box but once, and a vigorous sneeze followed. The court was polite enough to wish His Reverence good health, and the permission to testify was granted. As it happened, His Reverence began, he and his two well known friends were out shooting pheasants; that is, they were out hunting, to be perfectly correct. As they emerged from the *Bashanyitza* beyond the



Hussite chapel, they saw the beeters crowding around Lindner's omnibus, and Lindner himself was here to corroborate his statement. In the omnibus were some men; they were recently returned immigrants and had been celebrating their return in the usual fashion, and had brought with them a large number of bottles of *Palenka*. Lindner could tell the court how many. He and his friends had heard these men haranguing the beeters, and it was at the solicitation of the immigrants that they threw down their tools, loosened the oxen and marched into town.

He and his honored *confrères* marched after them, fearing trouble. Just as they came to the *Esplanade* the men stopped to pick up rocks, and were swinging them with menacing gestures. It was the defendant whom they saw step on to one of the benches and plead with the men to drop the stones; but they would not. At that point, His Reverence said, he cut across the cemetery to reach town quickly, because he was afraid they would cause serious trouble when they reached there, and it was he who notified the gendarmes. If the court so desired, Pan Yan Szenitzky who was also present, would continue the testimony.

There were further ceremonials of taking the oath and of the Pan's knocking his pipe on the nearest hard surface, which happened to be the desk of the court itself, and His Honor snorted at the Pan as if it had been his head which was being assaulted.

Pan Yan Szenitzky continued the narrative, that is, he would have continued it, but the court knows no short cuts, and he had to begin at the beginning, which gave him an opportunity to say a few uncomplimentary things about emigration in general and about those immigrants in particular, and also a few words about the demoralizing effects of sugar beets. However, his testimony

added little to that of Father Kalman, for when the orderly procession reached the Pan's house he had not gone further, for reasons best known to himself and to his family. Moritz Redlich was at the court's disposal and he could tell the rest of the story.

Moritz Redlich being a Jew, the court paraphernalia had to be changed before he took his oath. The crucifix was veiled, the Holy, much kissed and complete Bible was removed, and the Old Testament in Hebrew script took its place. Moritz Redlich was not so eloquent as his friends and he was coughing harder than usual; but he could convey this fact to the knowledge of the court: "That at the very least, the Sugar Trust owes the defendant an apology; for if it had not been for him, the glazier would be a few hundred Crowns richer, and it, correspondingly poorer." When Moritz Redlich resumed his seat, the defendant was asked to testify in his own behalf, and he had not spoken half a dozen sentences before the court room was as quiet as a church.

He had no grievance against those who bore false witness; they had been lied to all their lives and lived in a polluted atmosphere. He did quiet the mob and he did deplore violence, but he wanted the court to know how these people were treated, and if he *had* wronged the woman who accused him he would not have been the only man who wronged her that night. The barracks were a disgrace and a menace to society. The people were living in a pernicious atmosphere and the court ought to take cognizance of it. Then he indicted the Sugar Trust for treating its workers like animals; in fact, he said, the oxen were treated in a more humane manner than the beeters.

Pan Yan Szenitzky knocked his *Dresdenska* so hard on his boot heel that it nearly broke, and he whispered something to Moritz Redlich. Father Anton Kalman

again took snuff, tapping the box gracefully three times. The crowd began to applaud, and for the second time the court called to order.

To Yanek there came a feeling of exaltation after he had expressed his moral indignation. He looked around the court room, and although there were sullen looks enough, Sanctus Spiritus and Company smiled upon him and he was content. Yet he could not help wishing that Christina might have heard his plea for justice to the beeters.

The court again consulted paragraph this and statute that, looked at various formidable documents, and finally the Judge declared that the defendant was not guilty: "but inasmuch as his home has been searched and some printed matter found, which may be incriminating, the said defendant must be put under police surveillance, and not permitted to leave the town, till a decision is received from Budapest."

The first person to reach the defendant to offer congratulations was the Pan, and the fact that he lighted his pipe with one match, showed the high sprits he was in; for sugar beets had received their first public indictment, and the world was surely growing better.

Moritz Redlich shook Yanek's hand and said "In Hungary it is fine too, isn't it?" as a smile passed over his sad and wrinkled face. His Reverence came also, and opening the snuff tobacco box in his most impressive manner, offered it to Yanek. Of course he could not refuse.

"To your health, your Reverence," he said, as all too vigorously he inhaled the pungent stuff, and when his mother at last had a chance to throw herself into his arms, he was in no condition to be kissed, and it was not the first time in her life that she offered her son her handkerchief.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: VAVRA'S BUTCHER SHOP

**B**ACK of Vavra's butcher shop, Pan Vavra sold wine of native vintage, and a scraggly pine bough badly battered by many winds and hanging from a staff, announced that fact. However, the wine of Hraszova, made from grapes growing on the foot-hills of the Carpathian mountains, was a thin, puckery fluid; "brittle," the connoisseurs called it, quite like the Slovaks who had grown up in the same environment, and only the Slovaks found it palatable. The peasants craved something stronger than Vavra's shop offered, something which bit and stung and burned all the way down, and the few pennies they could spare for drink passed across the counter of the Jewish tavern keeper.

The Magyar aristocrats had their Casino, the Jews who were not admitted to it, organized one of their own, and the Slovaks, who represented various occupations, and whose clothes marked them as burghers and not as peasants, went to Vavra's.

There were bootmakers, who made the heavy, horse hide, shapeless boots of the peasants. Their business was all but ruined because the immigrants brought back shapely, American shoes which were infinitely more comfortable, and, strange to say, more lasting.

There were weavers of blue cloth, a thick, tough, unyielding stuff, from which the Sunday breeches of the peasants were made, the cloth being warranted to last through many generations of Sundays. That was before dyes and acids were imported from Germany, and



they were all produced at home with infinite labor, accompanied by unspeakable odors.

The *Hallinary* also patronized Vavra's. They made nothing but white cloth coats, so badly shaped that the sleeves were practically useless, unless one needed a strait-jacket. The coat was therefore worn as sort of a mantle over the sheepskin coat, which was made by the *Koshuchary*, and they, being Jews, never came to Vavra's.

Besides these, there were several shopkeepers, a few landowners whose holdings were large enough to require hired help, and one baker, whose rolls were taboo among the Jews, because he put lard into them. Every once in a while some of the Magyarized Slovaks would slip in under cover of the night, to eat Panyi Vavra's *Petchenka* and take a drink or two of wine; for the stomach remains strangely unaffected by a transfer of one's political loyalty.

On the whole it was a safe place for the leaders of Slovakdom to gather and talk about their wrongs, of which there were many. The right of political assembly was denied them; suffrage was so skillfully hedged about as to give the ruling minority the offices, without the necessity of counting the votes; in the primary schools, the Magyar language had to be taught, to the neglect of the mother tongue, and Slovak secondary schools did not exist. So there was much to talk about every evening in that plainly furnished room back of Vavra's butcher shop, and, on a particular evening when Yanek was the guest of honor, they discussed among other things, the coming parliamentary election.

Since his arrest and trial, his indecision had vanished, except when he faced Christina. Her mental poise, coupled with her preoccupation, kept him as reserved as she was. "She has the mind of a man and the heart of a mother," Dr. Makutchky used to say, and he

was a keen diagnostician. "She will marry either a very unfortunate man who needs her to take care of him, or one who is in every way her superior, and the latter kind is exceedingly rare," he added, suspecting Yanek's problem.

Christina was not satisfied to let Yanek's public protest against the treatment of the beeters pass unnoticed after it was uttered. She immediately began to create public opinion, and wrote a graphic article which appeared in one of the Budapest newspapers having the largest circulation among thinking people. She followed this by a signed protest directed to the Minister of Labor, and in it she cleverly intimated that anti-Magyar propaganda throve on such mistreatment. In an incredibly short time an order came from that source, abolishing the barracks.

Christina had definite plans for organizing co-operative societies, not only to eliminate the middleman, but also to develop the spirit of solidarity, and strengthen the rather weak sense of initiative among her people. With all this intellectual force, there was a tender, mystic piety about her, which kept her all woman, her weakness becoming strength in her conscious communion with God.

Nowhere in her scheme did Yanek see any room for himself, and at *Babushka's* meeting which he attended, he realized that there, he had nothing to give. They all had a childlike faith; his was shot through by a little learning. His Christ was an influence, theirs was a power; he knew a great deal about the *Logos*; they knew The Word which was from the beginning, though they hadn't the slightest idea just why John wrote the prologue to the Gospel which bears his name. He could pray eloquently, they talked to God; for He was with them in the very room in which they were meeting; his God was imminent, though he was never clear just what that meant.

In Christina, this world and the other world met; while in him, they were far apart. There was a certain kind of intellectual dishonesty in his thinking, of which he always became painfully conscious when he talked to her. The leaven of hypocrisy had touched him though he had another and more scientific name for it. She was a Slav, her mind had no hiding places; he was a Slav converted into an Anglo-Saxon, and he had been made to believe that he was a Christian.

Dr. Makutchky's revulsion against Nationalism he did not share; for he had drunk too deeply from a still unpolluted spring over there in the United States, where it was welding and shaping a nation out of many peoples. Too often, with inner gratitude and sincere loyalty, he had sung "My country 'tis of thee," and he had not yet sensed the "fatal European disease," as the doctor called it, which was leading the nations to the great abyss.

The schoolmaster was still the schoolmaster, by whose bedside he felt the strengthening and ennobling influence of an unselfish and holy purpose, and as he became conscious of the wrongs of his people, there came to him the call to leadership. When he was honest with himself, and that was not infrequently, he realized that his motive was not altogether unselfish, that he had tasted the glory of suffering for a cause, and that he was hungry for more of it. So it happened that he was at Vavra's wine shop, talking politics, and it was no small sop to his vanity to find that he was being consulted by his elders, about the coming campaign.

What silent men these square faced Slovaks were; how distrustful of themselves and of each other, how honestly conscious of their own faults and with it what lack of confidence in their virtues. There was only one firebrand in Vavra's wine shop, and he was the



Bohemian candymaker, Wenzel Motichka; but one was enough.

The Slovaks and the Czechs are cousins, but they are more like grandfather and grandson, the Slovak easily being the older, the sadder, the more disillusioned, the less progressive.

Just what made the difference, climate? There isn't much choice between the rigor of the Carpathians and that of the Bohemian hills.

History? Perhaps; but history means more than who was the first or last king, or what battles were fought here or there. It means, primarily, who were the enemies they faced when they battled, and who it was that conquered them.

To be invaded by the Germans and not by the Turks and Magyars; to bear a yoke scientifically fitted, rather than drag at a heavy, wearing chain; to have masters who know something more than their alphabet, or to have those who have none; that may account for the difference. Yet it may be true that the mythical Czech, the forerunner of the one race, was naturally a fighter, a rebel; and that Mech or Lech, who were his brothers and the supposed ancestors of the other Slavs, were the gentle, yielding, patient plowmen which all their descendants are.

Whatever the cause, and there is no cause, there are causes, the fact is that the Czech is the one dominant figure in Slavdom. He carries a "chip on his shoulder," and he is like an Irishman, fiddle, fight, drink and sing; but there the resemblance ceases, for he lacks the Irishman's sense of humor and his prodigality.

Wenzel Motichka, the candymaker was a Czech, an intensified Czech, who knew the history of Bohemia forward and backward and who had taken it upon himself to educate the Slovaks of Hraszova. He was accused by



his enemies of being there to make propaganda, but that was not the truth. He made propaganda because he was there, just as every Bohemian makes it, wherever he is placed in this universe.

He was not gentle with them, that is not the way of the Bohemian. He called them names; rightly or wrongly, he called them fools and asses, and the pathetic thing was, that nobody at Vavra's resented it. Even if they felt the insult, who among them had courage enough to face the wrath of Wenzel?

He had been holding forth for a long time that night, and the burden of his speech was that now was the time to strike. The monarchy was on its last legs. The Emperor-King, a sad, fascinating figure, was in his dotage, and Francis Ferdinand, the heir apparent, was following Germany in arming the nation and creating a fleet; all, to make German dominance permanent. Bosnia and Herzegovina had been annexed by the signatory powers without the consent of the inhabitants. The army was all but mobilized and its maneuvers were near the Serbian front.

The Southern Slavs were awakening, and there was active propaganda everywhere. They must become the lords of their own land, and if the Slavs did not stand together, who should? They must stand for their rights and cling to their language.

Wenzel was eloquent, and his eloquence was as acrid and intoxicating as Pan Vavra's wine. "Language," he cried, with upraised glass; "the Slav language! Long may it live!" And the toast was drunk amid an uproar of applause.

People have fought for dominion, for wealth, for religion; but none have fought for language as have the Bohemians, and the more wine Wenzel drank, the more it became his theme. "The German language is only a

re-hash of the Bohemian, and when I say Bohemian of course I mean Slovak." This to allay any possible hurt.

"Take the word *Okno*, window, it is as old as the ark of Noah, and the Germans got their word *Auge* from our *Okno*.

"Take the word for plow, which is *Pluch*. The Bohemians, and beg your pardon, the Slovaks also, plowed their fields when the Germans knew nothing about agriculture; and from whom have they the word *Pflug*, but from the Bohemians?—beg your pardon, I mean Slovaks too.

"Take another word, home, *Dom*. When the Germans lived in caves and had no such word, the Bohemians, and beg your pardon, the Slovaks, had a *dom*; and now the Germans, when they talk of the House of God, a real respectable House of God, speak of the *Dom*."

His etymology was faulty, but his appeal to Slav pride of precedence was effective, and more sour wine was consumed, and the silent Slovaks shook their heads and said: "*Tak, tak!*" though they had heard this particular preachment more than once.

Of course he could not finish his talk without proposing that they sing "*Hey Slovane*," the Slav revolutionary hymn, and it was only when Panyi Vavra came running in and warned them that the gendarmes patrol was passing, that he was silenced.

There was a great deal of blind, futile talk, as there always is on such occasions, and then Pan Brunovsky, the wealthiest of the shopkeepers, suggested that they hear from their honored guest from America. It was after all, to America they had to look for their salvation. America was waking them up, from America the immigrants brought not only money but also the feeling of power. In America was the big propaganda for their national independence. Many of their countrymen had

returned, but none of them as illustrious as their guest to-night, and now they would drink to the health of the Reverend Pan Hruby, and of course he must make a speech and tell them all about their countrymen in America.

During the last week Yanek had traveled swiftly back to his countrymen. It wasn't a "million leagues or so," as the schoolmaster had said, that he had been away from his people; a few steps, imperceptibly taken, had brought him back, and though he had, until now, resisted the constant temptation to drink, he could not refuse when the men proposed his health. So he clinked his glass with theirs, going all around, and said "*Na zdrav*" and drank with them, and the result was that he talked eloquently as always, that he said more than he believed and that he drank more than was good for him.

When he finished speaking they believed that he knew a thing or two, and more about politics than he really did know; for outside the fact that he had heard a few political speeches and knew something about government, having had a course in Political Science, and that he had had a share in rather innocent college politics, he had as little experience as they themselves.

The Slovak party would put up a candidate at the coming election though there was little hope of electing him, the ballot box being always manipulated in favor of the national candidate; but they would try again if only as a matter of protest. A man had been proposed, they said, who resided in one of the northern counties; but no one knew anything about him. Then Yanek had an inspiration. It was the American idea of having a man nominated who knew the district because he resided in it, and he named, as the best man in the whole kingdom, Pan Yan Szenitzky. Indeed, why had no one thought of that grand old man before? Honest, a Slovak every

inch of him, even refusing a Baronetcy to save his Slovak name. So it was resolved to push his candidacy, provided he would accept. That could with perfect safety be left to Yanek, that and a number of other things.

A house to house canvass of the whole district was to be begun at once, flags and posters must be in evidence, watchers for the polls secured, and above all else, a definite declaration on the part of both candidates as to their views regarding the rights of the Slovaks. Just who would do all this and how it should be done, was not quite clear to Yanek, but he knew it would be done, for every time he spoke, he gained more courage, the number of times he had to drink some one's health having perhaps something to do with it.

The night watchman blew the latest hour of the night when the Slovak dignitaries closed their session at Vavra's wine shop, and Yanek walked home arm in arm with Pan Brunovsky, who called him the savior of Slovakdom and praised his eloquence and the keenness of his mind. As Yanek passed the Pan's house, he thought he saw a dim light in the very window which, on the morning after his return home, he had seen a beautiful arm encircled by a bit of lace. Then he had looked away; now he threw a kiss at Sonya's window.

His father was sound asleep when he reached home, but his mother was anxious about her son, and wide awake. She wondered just why he was in such a happy mood. When he was in bed and still thinking of the events of the evening, she, not wanting him to know that she had been awake, called to him, "*Sinku muy*, why don't you sleep?" And he replied: "For gladness, *Mamushka*." Then he climbed up to the bake oven to kiss her, but she pushed him back, horror stricken, crying: "Oh, but *Sinku muy*, where have you been?"



## CHAPTER TWELVE: SUSANKA

“**N**OW, Susanka, you must smile, you must look happy,” Frau Sandor Redlich reiterated day after day to her wet nurse; but she didn’t look happy and she couldn’t smile, and the Redlich baby grew more puny and pallid, for it could not receive the proper nourishment from Susanka’s joyless breast.

“Sandor dear,” wailed the young mother, “can’t you make her look happy? She ought to be compelled to be happy when we are paying her such good wages and giving her just the same food that we eat; yet she sighs and grieves for her own baby till you would think that she is a married mother.”

“Sandor dear,” however, could not make the nurse happy, though he promised her a golden ducat for every smile, and went so far as to threaten to send for the gendarmes to arrest her, if she did not. The day of the feast at which the little stranger was to be introduced to Hraszova society was drawing very near, and both parents wished him to look well.

Dr. Lonyai, who presided at the birth of the baby, had recommended this particular Susanka and when she would not properly function, he had an interview with her which evidently did not improve the situation; for she came out of his office weeping, and that night the baby fretted and cried more than ever.

As usual when there was something really the matter, they called in Dr. Makutchky. “Well, Madam,” he asked Frau Sandor Redlich, when she had stated the trouble and had shown him the ill nourished baby and the tearful nurse; “how happy would you be if you had

to farm out your baby and then go and nurse another woman's baby, just because you were poor?

"How would you feel if you knew that your baby was in charge of some old *Baba*, who put a gag into its mouth or fed it on poppy seed oil to keep it quiet?

"No, no, I did not mean to insinuate anything. Of course it couldn't have happened to you, and it does happen to these peasant girls; but, Madam, Susanka is just as much woman as you are, though her maternity is a little irregular; but though that cow of yours hasn't had a legalized wedding, if you take away her new born calf she will call for her own, even if another calf pulls her udder.

"Your Susanka happens to be a particularly decent girl, and perhaps that is the reason her grief is greater than that of the usual peasant girl. Perhaps you don't know that her baby has a very respectable father. Yes, of course she ought to have known better, but if these girls did know better, where would your kind get wet nurses? It would be a calamity of course, if our "*Panyi Velcomoshny*" should have to nurse their own babies, and spoil their lovely forms. Medicine won't help," he answered, for the third and fourth time, in his curt, dry way. "Make that man promise Susanka that he will marry her, or get another wet nurse."

Frau Redlich was quite willing to go and talk to the man if she knew him, or get another wet nurse; but the supply of wet nurses was running short. The men were coming back from America and marrying the girls, and there were no more scandalous interludes which produced wet nurses. Dr. Lonyai had taken a great deal of trouble in finding this one for them.

Dr. Makutchky had no professional jealousy, neither was he vindictive; but he was very human, and so, being momentarily off his guard, he said in his iciest manner:

"Madam, I have never produced a wet nurse; perhaps Dr. Lonyai can, if he goes to some more trouble," and with that he reached for his hat and left the house.

When Sandor Redlich came home, his wife told him tearfully that Dr. Makutchky was horrible as usual, and that one ought never to consult him, and that he was no gentleman for he insinuated that she might have been a wet nurse.

Sandor Redlich hardly listened, for he had other troubles besides quieting his almost hysterical wife. Things were not going well at the brewery. There was constant friction between Herr Ritter and the Slovak workmen, and the head brewer, a Bohemian, threatened to leave. Money was being spent freely but thus far no products had been shipped, and no money was coming in; then his father was constantly complaining and worrying, his younger brother Henry was gambling at the Casino and drawing heavily on the resources of the firm, and now this trouble about Susanka and the baby! He scarcely trusted himself to glance at the little, suffering thing. It looked for all the world like a grasshopper; nothing but skin and bones.

In spite of Susanka's visible wretchedness, the feast in the baby's honor was now to take place, after having been often postponed, and the house had been turned upside down in preparation. Turkeys, so rare in that country that they are called "Indians," were slaughtered, geese which had been fattened till they could not breathe were put out of their misery, cakes and *tortes* were baked and the choicest pears and grapes were brought from Budapest. Numerous bottles of champagne were carefully nursed by Henry Redlich, who knew just how they should be handled. The firm of Redlich would spare nothing at such a time as this, and the number of invitations which had been sent out

was as liberal as the provision made for the entertainment of expected guests was generous.

However, just whom to invite was not as easily decided as planning the menu. The relationship was carefully scanned and the orthodox and poorer relatives, and the two were almost synonymous, were eliminated. There was no use sending an invitation to the Rabbi; he would regard it as an insult, when the child had not been circumcised. They had greatest difficulty with the list of Redlich relatives. Moritz Redlich was a great stickler for family. According to him, cousins far removed were still in the family, and the poorer they were the more were they in need of attention and of a good meal once in a while; and naturally the more pious and the poorer they were, the less presentable, on an occasion of this kind, when many of their guests were to be Gentiles, the élite of Hraszova. At least the élite men were to be there; the women who always make finer social distinctions, had no dealings with the Redlichs, though they had money and served the greatest delicacies at their table.

Of course Sanctus Spiritus and Company were to sit at the center of the table, one has to humor old men; then Madam Redlich, and her daughter Sophie, with Dr. Lonyai next to her. The world might as well know now as any other time that the two are destined for each other; although when one talked to Sophie about him, the tears came into her eyes and she would shake as if she had chills.

"That is to be expected," said Frau Sandor. "I felt the same way when they mentioned my perfect dear, as a possible husband."

The great day had come, the preliminaries had been arranged successfully, and Herr and Frau Redlich awaited their guests. Susanka was sitting in the nursery in festal attire, with her multitude of starched skirts and



a brand new apron, all embroidery and lace, a gift from the Madam, to evoke a smile, which it didn't. She wore a rich *prutzlik*, not too tightly laced of course, and around her neck a silver chain and locket, a gift from Frau Redlich's parents, also designed to make her happy, in which it too failed.

In her arms, wrapped tightly in a damask covered pillow tied about with the most gorgeous ribbon, was the little baby, looking for all the world with its screwed up, wrinkled face, like Moritz Redlich, its unhappy grandfather.

"Oh! Susanka," urged the anxious parents, "do smile. You must smile when you come in to present the baby! You know each guest will give you a present."

How many prospective gold pieces were held out to her, just to smile. Every one urged her to smile. The caterer and the dishwasher, the midwife, who could understand other things besides the birth of babies. "What luck!" she told Susanka, "to have had a baby just in time to be a wet nurse in the Redlich family." The nurse evidently did not appreciate her privilege; she had a faraway look in her eyes and scarcely seemed to know that she had a baby in her arms.

In the parlor there was a hubbub of effusive greetings and laughter. The Magyar gentlemen clicked their heels and kissed the hand of the young mother, who looked so delicately interesting. Many of the guests presented flowers with their congratulations. Father Anton Kalman, wearing his best satin *sutan*, was received like an old friend of the family. "What a comfort you are to father and how good of you to come," said Sandor Redlich.

Pan Yan Szenitzky had not made any change in his attire. He and Yanek came together. There had been some question whether to invite Yanek or not, but finally

it was decided that it would look very well in the newspaper account of the affair to say, that the Reverend Yanek Hruby, recently from America, was one of the guests. Of course they had to be careful not to seat him anywhere near the Baron or the Judge, but when there were so many that could be managed. It was a bitter pill for Andrew Feher, who acted as butler on this occasion, to open the door for a Slovak, the son of his enemy to boot.

Herr Ritter came, wearing the uniform of his corps, with the many colored ribbons across his breast, and it was noticeable that Pan Kukulish, the postmaster, did not appear, and that for the simple reason that he was not invited. After the scandal he had been dropped from membership in the Casino, and so of course, was no more among the élite.

Kuby Fish, one of the few Jews who could be reckoned among the elect, came, immersed in an atmosphere of various perfumes, and some one suggested that he needed something strong to take the odor of oxen out of him. "You can't imagine, Madam, how hard it was for me to come, with so much to do and the sugar season at its height; but who could withstand such an invitation?" he said, his eyes on the heavy laden tables; for they were passing into the dining room.

As for the ladies of Hraszova, they had put on their best to go to the Redlich's on this occasion, and the best was very good. A little too shimmering and glittering, perhaps, a little too much or too little, considering the hour of the day and the tendency of the ladies to corpulency, a little too much Orient; but that of course was natural, even to ladies who couldn't trace their ancestry so directly from King Solomon.

The Gypsies' playing added to the tumult as course followed course. The roasted fowl succeeded the frag-

rant soup, and Kuby Fish, balancing a piece of white meat of the turkey on his fork, looked at it with the air of a connoisseur, for once before at a wedding he had eaten "Indian," although it was not as good as this.

Dr. Lonyai was very attentive to Sophie, but she was talking to Yanek who sat opposite her, and recalling to his mind the pen he had given her when she was mourning for her mother. She upbraided him for not coming to see them. If he would come she would play and sing for him the latest American songs which the Fräulein had taught her.

Unfortunately the Fräulein was placed next to Yanek, the hostess thinking that two Americans would be happy in each other's society, but they had lived in different worlds. In the New World, hers was bounded by the cabarets, the big department stores, the board walk in Atlantic City, and the movies; while his!—How far away that world seemed to him just now, that sheltered America of his, that straight and narrow America, on the border between the Old and New Testaments, the America of his college, where cards were played on the sly, where calling on the co-eds on Sunday was a severe breach of traditions; and smoking cigarettes was among the "Thou Shalt Nots" of the Decalogue.

The worst of it was that the Fräulein thought her pleasure loving, reckless, ostentatious, frankly wicked America, was the whole of it, with a few fanatics whom she called "Muckers," to mar the pleasure; and he thought it was all like his America, oscillating between *The Presbyterian Review* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, and when it was very wicked, straying as far as the Sunday Newspaper. The two had as much in common as Lillian Russell and the President of the Moody Institute in Chicago would have, if fate or bad management should bring them together on a social occasion.



Fräulein called Yanek "Meester" Hruby, and she rolled her r's in the back of her throat as if she were using a gargle. She had a way of shaking her finger at him when she narrated some of the "American *schkandals*," of which he assured her he knew nothing.

"Oh, you naughty Meester Hruby, you have it thick behind the ears!" And when she found that he really knew nothing and cared nothing for her unsavory American experiences, she began running down Hraszova, and pitied herself for having to live in such "a bum place."

Henry Redlich having left the table, reappeared with the bottles of champagne, and the ladies held their hands to their ears for a few anxious minutes before he succeeded in uncorking the first bottle. A certain number of guests, among them the Judge and Herr Ritter, were seen to brace themselves for the ordeal of answering to a toast, and the Gypsies scraped their fiddles violently, reaching a climax called a "*Tusch*," which was a more or less musical way of calling the guests to order. It took more than a "*Tusch*" to quiet the diners and winers. Through the subsiding clamor there were still heard feminine voices approvingly reproving some indelicate verbal delicacy, the guffas of those who did not know the subtle but swift influence of sparkling wine, and the murmured regrets of others, that the rich *tortes* were not to be passed at least once more.

Sandor Redlich had risen, and the noisiest among the guests were crying "*Silentium!*" and were knocking on the table with their forks. Kuby Fish rescued a huge pear, which was being taken from the table without hearing the toasts, and put it in his pocket, and the Fräulein who had noticed it, for she noticed everything, said to "Meester" Hruby, "What a *schkandal!*"

At last all was silent except for Moritz Redlich's cough and the audible breathing of the Judge, who had eaten



beyond discretion. Then the host spoke words of welcome in behalf of himself and his wife and his family to be, and the honor, the lasting honor, of having these illustrious guests at his table. He hoped that the meager fare they had provided (and he mentally scanned the enormous bills to be paid), would express to them in some measure the happiness which was theirs on this day, when their son,—and then Kuby Fish interrupted with “And may there be at least six of them!” but was called down by another chorus of “*Silentium!*” “And now,” continued Sandor, “our son, the pride of our lives, will be introduced to you.”

Susanka entered, carrying the damask bolster with the tiny, wrinkled, unhappy looking face of the baby protruding at the top. Behind her marched the midwife urging her on, for her feet were very reluctant. The guests rose and drank to baby Istvan's health amid loud *Elyens*. Susanka, who should have gone smilingly through the ceremony of presenting the baby to each guest, was being pushed along by the midwife, and there was much shaking of heads as they looked at the baby and then at her. The midwife had to collect the presents, for Susanka's hands were clenched as tightly as her pale lips were closed.

When she came to the baby's grandfather, he began to lament about the *Yiddish* child which was not to be *Yiddished*; but his wife pulled him by the coat and told him not to forget where he was. Then he bit his lips, and to the amazement of every one he said: “Yes, baby, in America it is fine,” and he buttoned and unbuttoned his coat, and the young people began to titter and the older ones whispered to one another, “too bad the old man is losing his mind.”

When Susanka came to Dr. Lonyai, he pretended not to see her. He was talking to Sophie, his arm on the

table and his face turned full upon her, and she was trembling all over as usual, when he was near her. She could not bear the look in his eyes, and she told her father that the way he looked at her made her feel as if she were standing naked before him.

Susanka had not moved, for the midwife had not pushed her, and she stood perfectly motionless before Dr. Lonyai. Then Sophie, who was trying to avoid looking at him, noticed that the nurse was swaying, and that she had stretched out her hand toward Dr. Lonyai. The next moment he felt the touch of her hand heavy upon his shoulder, and as he pushed her roughly aside without looking at her, Susanka collapsed and fell at his feet.

Of course there was a commotion. Some one called for camphor, and another for cold water, and still another was beating the nurse on the back as if that would bring her to consciousness.

The Gypsies had the good sense to begin playing, Susanka staggered to her feet and was led from the room by the midwife, who had rescued the baby.

The Fräulein whispered to Yanek "What a *Schkan-dal*," and looked knowingly at Dr. Lonyai, who tried to appear unconcerned. Sandor Redlich again arose amid cries of "*Silentium*," and apologized for the incident. The times were growing worse he said, peasants did not know their places, and wet nurses were not the happy, smiling creatures they used to be. He would now call on Herr Ritter to respond to the toast "The Ladies."

The usual "*Tusch*" was scraped by the violins, and amid *Elyens* and repeated *Elyens*, Herr Ritter arose. Moritz Redlich's cough was nearly choking him, and he left the room without apologizing.

The Herr Ritter charmed the ladies by his speech which was seasoned by wit, and embroidered with quotations from the German poets, and while his eyes wan-

dered from one lady to the other, they always evaded those of Madam Redlich. When he finished there was the usual applause, in which, however, a number of the gentlemen failed to join. The host then introduced the honorable Judge who would propose the toast to the nation, *Magyar Orszag*.

"The yellow leather bag," as Fräulein called him whispering to Yanek, arose, and launched into a tedious recital of Hungarian history from the time of Stephan the First, to that day. In his peroration he saw *Magyar Orszag* safely established between the Carpathians and the Iron Gate. As he pictured the country with all its enemies subdued and no language but Hungarian spoken, he called upon all loyal Magyars to rise and drink the health of Hungary. The Magyars rose with alacrity, clicked their heels and lifted their glasses. Kuby Fish was not quite so quick; he did not dare rise because his bulging pockets betrayed his frequent pilfering. Pan Yan Szenitzky did not move from his seat, and Yanek followed his example.

The Judge grew so angry, that he quite forgot himself and cried "treason"! The Slovaks declared themselves insulted and demanded an immediate apology. The ladies were frightened and appealed to Kuby Fish to tell a funny story to divert the attention of the men; but the frequent toasts had put him past the ability to tell anything coherent, and the quarrel began.

Father Anton Kalman had eaten and drunken generously, and was tapping his snuff tobacco box more than once. After having stowed away a generous pinch of snuff he rose, and stretched his hands over the excited guests as if in benediction; then sat down again.

The Pan attempted to light his *Dresdenska* and failing in the attempt, rose, and made the longest speech he had ever made in public. First he knocked his pipe on the



table, then he said: "Gentlemen, this is not Hungary, but Slovakland, and if the Magyars who are here to oppress the Slovaks do not like it in Hraszova, they are welcome to leave."

A surging mass of excited men swayed toward the Pan's seat, and in the midst of the excitement he succeeded in lighting his pipe. Yanek threw himself between the men and the threatened Pan. There was loud knocking on the table and calls of "*Silentium*"; and the host begged them all to remember that this was not a tavern, and to respect the peace and the good name of his home. The ladies were almost hysterical and clung to the men, begging them to be quiet and go home.

The Gypsies began to play, fearing that in the quarrel their tips would be forgotten, and with the strains of the *Rakoczy* march, they lured many a *crown* out of the pockets of the guests. Under the spell of the music, passions momentarily cooled, adieus were said and apologies offered and accepted.

Pan Yan Szenitzky and Yanek left together, and the Judge fired after them a parting shot. "We will get you yet, you dumb Slovaks." "Unless we get you first," Yanek replied, and that the Judge remembered, though he had to be carried to his carriage, with *Magyar Orszag* and the rest of the world revolving violently around him.

Kuby Fish alone remained seated. When all had gone, he picked up the last bunch of grapes and while he was eating it, said: "*Magyar Orszag* or no *Magyar Orszag*, such fine grapes must not be wasted."

The Pan had taken more than one glass of champagne, and it was rousing his Slovak blood to an unwonted heat. Never before in all his life, had he talked so much about showing the Magyars who were the masters of Slovakland, and Yanek thought: "This is the psychological moment." Quite casually he said: "There is only one



man in the district of Hraszova who can show them who are the masters."

"Who in the devil's name can it be?" thought the Pan. Before they reached the big gate, he knew and was quite convinced that it was his duty to run for Parliament; but it wasn't because he had drunk too much champagne, or because he had quarreled with the Judge, or because Yanek declared him to be the greatest and truest Slovak in the district. No, indeed. The Pan was sober, and not as vain as Yanek thought him, and the psychological moment didn't have much to do with it.

The Pan said to himself: "If I get into Parliament, I will smash the Sugar Trust and I will prohibit emigration and they will not plant sugar beets." There was just one lingering doubt in his mind, as he saw himself transplanted to Budapest. How could he get along without his cronies, the other members of Sanctus Spiritus and Company?

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN: WHEN THE CAT SNEEZED

**Y**OU will see, something terrible will happen!" Yanek's mother said to him that evening when he had reached home and told her just what they had to eat at the Redlich's, who was there, how handsomely the ladies were dressed, and had answered her other numerous questions; for his account was too brief, as it always is for a woman, when a man is giving an account of a social occasion. He had not told her about the quarrel with the Judge, for she had been very much worried about him since his arrest; and about Susanka, he told her only after repeated questions as to how the baby and the nurse looked, and whether she had received many presents from the guests.

"*Mamushka* you are a pessimist," he told her at the dire prophecy she made, and when he explained to her what a pessimist is, she told him she was nothing of the kind; but that the cat had sneezed, and when the cat sneezes something terrible is going to happen. "The big yellow and white tom cat, the *Mlada Panka* Christina's cat sneezed the day you were arrested. Educated people can read the newspapers after the things happen, but a cat knows them before they happen, and may the *Pan Boch* preserve us when the cat sneezes."

Indeed may the *Pan Boch* preserve us; for Sultan barked and growled and tugged at his chain, the horses were restless and so was Yanek's father, who did "not know what had got into the beasts." He went out into the stables and petted his favorites. He scolded the dog, and when he returned he told Yanek that while he had

no confidence in sneezing cats and talking women, it was different with dogs and horses, and it would not surprise him if indeed something were going to happen. Yanek shared in the prevailing depression. He felt disappointed with himself; the straight and narrow path upon which he had entered, showed devious windings, and had widened until it had become trackless.

Those oldest and most persistent enemies of mankind, pride and lust, which he thought he had overcome, were merely unawakened, and now at their first stirring, he had all but capitulated to them. His sensitive conscience helped him to repent but not to conquer. Like Adam "he knew that he was naked," but was not sure that he would not eat another apple should Eve offer him one. He had conscience but not will; the burglar alarm sounded, but only after the doors were broken open. So absorbed was he in his painful reflections that his mother had to remind him more than once that they had not had their prayers. He wished she had forgotten, for prayer, whatever else it may or may not do, searches one's heart, that is, when one really prays and does not merely chew the cud of one's soul.

Evidently the cat was not worried about the dreadful things her sneezing portended, for she was curled up in the corner purring contentedly. Sultan had ceased his growling and there was silence in the adjoining stable; but all nature grew suddenly restless. There was a roar of sullen, booming thunder, the dimly lighted room became brightened by sharp flashings of lightning, the wind surged through the yard, lashing the eaves, and as the timbers in the roof began to creak, heavy drops of rain pelted the thatch. Then in a sudden, ominous silence they heard the cry of a bird, like that of a hawk rising from the ground, the flaring light became steady for a moment, increased in brilliancy and a mighty crash

followed, shaking the house. Stephan Hrubby and his wife were on their knees, praying that the *Pan Boch* might spare their miserable lives. The rain descended in torrents and Elzabetha insisted that Yanek should put the Bible into the window as a safeguard against the storm, and though he opened it at the forty-sixth Psalm, she and his father sought added refuge and strength under the big feather bed.

The gutter in front of the house had overflowed, and the whole yard was a raging stream. The roar of the swollen river, the crashing thunder, the beating rain and the tearing wind made it impossible to leave the *isba*, although Yanek knew that something indeed terrible had happened. In the lull of the storm he heard pathetic cries, and in spite of his mother's entreaties he rushed out and made his way to the dimly lighted *hospice*, from which came the wailing of the women and the hollow laugh of Pepo.

The frightened women were on their knees. Pepo was babbling and laughing. When Yanek finally succeeded in getting the women to talk, they told him that Pepo's girl had flown away; that the devil came in, riding on the forked end of a streak of lightning, and that he took Pepo's child and flew away with her. They saw her spread her arms out and she was lifted up and taken through the roof. They swore that the door was not opened.

He quieted the women and returning to the *isba* persuaded his father to go out with him to look for the child. Martzin who had slept through the storm was wakened. Reluctantly he lighted a lantern and they started in the direction of the storm, toward the river, making their way cautiously from one acacia tree to another. When they came to the garden gate they found it blocked by débris, and in clearing it away to get through,



Martzin suddenly called on the devil to take him if he hadn't struck something warm.

They extricated Pepo's child and carried her into the *isba*. The entire household which had been aroused by the storm, crowded into the small room. Marisha, who had never taken her motherhood seriously, was suddenly seized by maternal anguish; everybody wanted to do something and no one did anything. Christina as usual brought order into the chaos. While the child was being undressed, she ordered hot water, and sent one of the men for the doctor; but before he came the heart beats had grown fainter and the poor mortal, conceived in passion and confusion, had passed into immortality on the last fluttering wings of the storm.

Marisha having lamented enough to satisfy propriety, permitted herself to be led out of the room, though she showed no signs of faintness. Stephan and Elzabetha crawled on top of the bake oven to try to sleep and Yanek and Christina remained to watch by the dead, whose face for the first time seemed illumined by a dim spark of spirit. One must be silent with the dead; so they watched till the gray of the morning, and while their lips scarcely moved, their hearts were speaking loudly. His was crying out to her: "I have always worshiped you. You have seen it in my eyes, for I looked up to you as to a goddess. When I prayed, I prayed to you, and when my soul aspired after the good, it was merely reaching out after you. When I crossed the sea I went to make myself worthy of you, and when I confessed the Christ and promised to follow Him, the goal was you, and the reward sought was in you. I am slipping away from you! Hold me to yourself, hold me to your God!" In the great agony of his spirit, he involuntarily stretched out his hands across the dead body of the child, and they sought hers.

Her hands were outstretched to his; for she too had been speaking, though he did not hear. "You were always mine, *Muy Yanetchek!*" She repeated it over and over again as she looked at him, while he avoided her searching, pitying gaze. "Mine, as the broken toys were always mine. Mine, as the lame chickens and the motherless lambs were always mine. Mine, when I shared with you my bread and butter, pitying you because you had none. I held you in my heart when I prayed, 'Dear *Jeshzitshek*, keep him for me;' I prayed that a thousand times, and I knew my prayer was answered when God sought you and found you for me.

"I waited for your coming home as *Babushka* has taught me to wait for the coming of the Lord, and when I looked into your face and saw your clear eyes, I thought I could see into your pure soul, and I knew that you were mine. I believed you to be strong of purpose and with a God directed will. You are still mine, mine more than ever, because I know you are weak, and carried along by the current of passion like that which moves other men. But, oh! my boy," and then their hands met, for she was reaching out after him; "I am as weak as you are, and my heart too cries out after the flesh; but it is crying out after him whose brow my hands have laved, whom my heart has pitied, who is weak and helpless in body, but whose soul is unconquerable. Forgive me, *Muy Yanetchek!*"

There was an answer in her eyes to his prayer, but none to his passion. She looked weary and worn and old. "*Mater Dolorosa*," he said to himself, as he went out to fetch the brass candlesticks from the Pan's house; for the little body was to lie in state, and nothing was to be missing. As he stepped out into the gray of the morning, the mist was hovering over the rain soaked earth, the swallows under the eaves were chirping, though

their nests were utterly ruined; the pigeons were cooing, and Martzin was cursing as he curried the horses, for he had not had enough sleep.

In the Pan's house they were all awake and the servants were busy in the kitchen. Marisha went after the candlesticks, but she did not bring them. "The *Mlada Panka* Sonya will fetch them herself." Then she began to weep, and bemoaning her sad lot, went back to her morning's tasks.

The chill of the dawn crept into Yanek's bones as he paced up and down, waiting for Sonya. He half wished she would not come, for the very mention of her name roused in him that which he bitterly resented, but which was filling him with an intense and secret joy. He heard her light step and conjured up the image of Christina, as he prayed that she would save him. It was all in vain. He dared not look up though he knew Sonya was standing before him. He stretched out his hands for the candlesticks, but when he felt the soft, yielding touch of her hands, the storm of the night seemed to surge through him, and forgetting everything, he drew her close and closer to him and kissed her.

Sonya's silence, and the sound of iron heels scraping over the cobble stone pavement brought Yanek rudely back to earth. He tore the candlesticks out of her hands and fairly ran to the door. There stood the baker's boy: "May the *Panka* Marie and Saint Joseph save us! What a dreadful night it was! Does the *Pan Velcomoshni* know that the Redlich baby was found dead in its crib, and the nurse is gone and they have searched for her everywhere and she cannot be found, and they say that the Jews have killed her? What terrible things have happened!"

When Yanek reached the *isba*, he was so shaken that he could hardly hold the candlesticks. With his face

averted he told them the terrible news he had just heard, and his mother said: "I told you when the cat sneezes it is always a sign that something terrible will happen."

Ah me, Mother Elzabetha! She did not know what a terrible thing had happened to her son.



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE CIRCUMCISION

"**I** AM willing to be forgiven," nature seemed to say the morning after the storm, and she said it smilingly with no trace of regret. "The sun shall shine to-day and the air will be soft, and stir but gently, and the mist rising from the valley will disappear and the birds sing as usual, and it shall be just such a well behaved day as you might expect in the fall of the year, when just such days might be expected."

But the sunshine and the birds could not silence the roar of the river, which came dashing down from the mountains, devouring adobe huts, and then swirling the timber and the straw-thatched roofs in its eddies, like a lion playing with the bones of its victims, cracking them at its leisure to aid digestion. Men were cursing the river and each other, women were praying and weeping, and a mob was gathering around Sandor Redlich's house. Like the evil spirits driven from their habitations, seeking new ones, so the spent storm had entered into the hearts of men.

The odors of cooking and frying, mingled with the fumes of wine and stale tobacco smoke, clung to the musty air of the stricken home. Rosa was lying on a couch in the parlor, beating the pillows and giving vent to her grief in short, dry sobs of agony, her strength having been all but spent in her greater lamentations. Her parents sat on the floor, the father swaying back and forth as all his Fathers before him had swayed when they approached the great mystery. In their heart breaking grief they sought Israel's God and found him; for he has always dwelt in the cloud.

Madam Redlich was sitting in the bent wood rocking chair, her hair still in puffs and curls, and the rouge not washed from her face except as tears had made inroads upon it. Occasionally she looked at her polished finger nails, and between flashes of the great sorrow which had descended upon them all, she was wishing for her manicure set and looking apprehensively out of the window, watching the gathering crowd.

In the adjoining room lay the poor, strangled baby, and Moritz Redlich was walking up and down, talking to it; for there was much to say just at this time when the storm had left wreck and ruin behind it. Everything was bent or torn by it. The Burial Society had refused to grant a Jewish burial to the child, or even a place in the cemetery; the Christians were enraged over the disappearance of the nurse, Sandor and his wife were paralyzed by grief and fear. As for his own wife, the storm had but stirred the dregs of her shallow soul, while it had lifted him up, and to him they all came and on him they all leaned, as always.

"*Nu nu* babykin," he said, as he stopped in front of the little crib, and looked into the drawn face of the child. "You got there before your grandfather! A quick trip, little baby, a quick trip! What have you missed? Nothing, nothing! Seventy-four years my next birthday, and I shall go out as thin, and wrinkled, and starved as you." For a moment everything looked red before him as he saw the marks of the strangling on its neck. He shook himself violently, as if to get rid of something that had gripped him, and vainly tried to turn his mind from the pursuing thought which seemed to lead him right to the sign dangling from the walls of the old distillery while the Herr Ritter pulled the rope.

"It is fine in America, it is fine, it is fine!" Dozens of times he repeated it, yet always the same image re-

mained in his mind, always something in him urging him to end it all, promising a great silence, if only the silence of the grave.

There was a knock at the door, and Christina and Yanek entered. They had made their way through the mob and had partially quieted it by saying that they were searching for the nurse, and that they knew she had not been harmed by the Jews. The sight of Yanek seemed to relieve the tension of the old man. He threw himself at him, grasped him by the lapel of his coat, and cried: "It is fine in America, isn't it, isn't it?" Then fiercely, "tell me that it is fine in America!"

Yanek told him that indeed it was fine, but that it was still better with God. One of the things he had always dreaded was to utter phrases which had no meaning to himself, which he had not tested; but this he knew, that there is peace with God, though he had not entered into it, and just now needed that assurance himself.

From Christina's lips the words of comfort came more naturally. She dwelt with God, and when she spoke, her words came with the authority of one who had penetrated into the Holy Presence. She put her arms around the old man and soothed him until the sobs of grief grew less and he raised his bowed head, again to face his great and crushing problems.

The next thing to do was to find the nurse and avert a calamity which would fall upon all the Jews of Hraszova. No doubt she had fled to her baby, but the bridges were washed away and the mob could not be checked very long. Then came the other problem, the burial of the baby. He had called the members of the Burial Society together, but they were deaf to his entreaties. Of course they had nothing against him, but for an uncircumcised child, deliberately left without cir-



cumcision by its parents, there was no grave, though he owned the lot upon which it was to be buried.

The mob outside was bad, as bad and unreasoning as all mobs are, for it was animated by ages of hatred; but that his own people should be so unreasonable, Moritz Redlich could not understand. He appealed to the Rabbi, who consulted the law and sought for a precedent which he did not find, and which he was not eager to find. The distracted grandfather offered money, but money was of no avail; he pleaded his own faithfulness, and his own service to the Jewish community, he entreated, he wept; all in vain. The child's parents had definitely withdrawn themselves from their people and they must take the consequences. The poor man went away to make one last appeal to the Rabbi, and Christina and Yanek were alone with the body of the child, the second time face to face with death in less than a day.

The problem of death was simple enough, Christina said; but how complicated life was, what a mess human beings made of their existence, what needless and yet everlasting strife. To her it was all clear enough, it was God's way of leading mankind upward through the turmoil and confusion into the everlasting peace.

"It is easy enough for Christina," Yanek thought as he watched her sweet face which spread such contagious calm. "The strife is all without her and not within. Would she be as sure that it is God's way if this were her personal sorrow? To carry the burdens of others is after all, easy."

"Christina," he said, after a long silence, and he was astonished at himself after he asked the question, "would you say all that if this were your own baby? Would you say it is God's will?" She looked at him for a moment, and a flitting shadow passed over her face as if she were visualizing such a scene as part of her life.



"I have asked myself that question many a time," she replied, "and I have not been bold enough to say yes, but I have hoped and prayed that if it should come to me I would face it just this way.

"I know what you mean. This is after all the burden of another woman, of another home, even of another world; every grief is one's own, and no matter how hard we try to enter, we are left on the outside of the door. We leave our cards of condolence or we say the customary platitudes which every one says at such a time; but fortunately for the sufferer she is left alone with the heavenly visitor. But, Yanek, if our faith means anything at all it means something for us at a time like this. I think I would suffer the way Rosa suffers. I hope I would, but I should have a Comforter Whom she has not.

"It is easier to bear the burdens of others, and yet in a way it is harder, that is, if you really carry one end of the load. You see one has to walk over such strange paths. Here we are in Sandor Redlich's home, where we came just to say that we are sorry for him, and now," she said with a smile, "we have the Rabbi and the Burial Society on our hands, and the poor little baby"—and her voice grew deep and quivered like the tones of a 'cello, as she looked into the crib.

Naturally, he was more worn than she; for men are the weaker sex face to face with great calamities. He threw himself down before her, and buried his head in her hands and sobbed as if his heart would break. He longed to tell her all about it; the confusion in his own heart, the temptations which assailed him, the doubts as to his own integrity, his jealousy of the schoolmaster and his forfeited right to harbor such thoughts; but it all turned into a prayer which, though it was addressed

to God, was meant for her; so while he cried: "Oh God help me!" he was thinking only of her.

"Yes, God help us!" she echoed, and thought of the heartbroken mother in the next room, of the old man battling for the right to bury his grandchild, of the poor girl who had taken the life of this baby to be free to go to her own; and she thought of this boy for whom her prayers had so often been offered, but she thought most of the schoolmaster whose brave struggle for life grew daily more hopeless.

In the living room they heard the penetrating voice of Dr. Makutchky, ordering Rosa to bed and forbidding any one to enter her room. Madam Moritz Redlich he sent home, and she was not sorry to go. They heard him walking up and down the room, which had grown very still. Suddenly he entered the room where they were. Yanek had risen, and turning away his flushed face, hardly replied to the doctor's greeting, given in his usual brusque manner, after which he said: "Christina, you will have to go home," and without waiting for her to reply he took her coat and began helping her on with it. "I don't want you for my patient, but if you keep on at this pace I shall have to leave the schoolmaster to the tender mercies of your Marisha, and she is in no state of mind to help anybody.

"You stay," he said just as determinedly to Yanek who was making ready to accompany her. "You on the whole, are not as valuable as she is. Don't be offended," he added, seeing Yanek's confusion; "this whole town isn't of as much value as she, but just now I need you."

Christina called him an old grizzly bear and a cannibal, and a flatterer at that; but she went, leaving the two men alone.

Doctor Makutchky sent Yanek out into the kitchen to

get a towel and a basin of hot water, and when he returned he noticed that the doctor had unpacked his surgical instruments.

Without stopping his preparations he said: "You see we doctors have to do something more than try to keep people from dying. I have just now solved a problem which has puzzled the Rabbis of many generations. I passed the Rabbi's house and heard what I thought was a riot, and poor old Moritz weeping like a child. I went in to see what they were doing to the old man. I thought they would stop when I came in, but they were all so red in the face and their eyes so swollen by rage that they did not see me. They were like a lot of crows pecking at the old man's bleeding heart. It was the Burial Society torturing the dear old soul.

" 'Let him take the body to his old friend the priest,' one of them suggested.

" 'To the Reverend Herr Sanctus,' another one chimed in. I felt like throwing my cane at them.

" 'No uncircumcised child can be buried in our cemetery,' the Rabbi finally declared, and he evidently had said it more than once. The old crows were laughing in their sleeves, though they were too cowardly to laugh outright. Then I spoke up. 'Rabbi,' I said, 'I know a little something about the Old Testament and a little less about the *Mishna* and the other things you are talking about, but I think I know a whole lot about God Almighty. I don't believe that He would deal with the vilest man, as you have dealt with this saint.'

" 'What has this to do with God Almighty, hallowed be His name,' one of the crows croaked at me. 'This is something between the Burial Society and the parents of this child, which was deliberately separated from his people. What business is it of yours anyway to come in here?'

“‘Hm!’ I told him that I was not talking to the Burial Society, but to the Rabbi who was supposed to interpret the Spirit of God. ‘Rabbi,’ I said, ‘may anybody, a Jew or a Gentile, circumcise a Jewish child?’

“The Rabbi put on his glasses. You know he needs his glasses to think.

“‘Yes, in an emergency, anybody may do it,’ he replied.

“‘What happens if the child dies just before the circumcision?’ There I had the old man cornered, and he did need his glasses. He took down one volume after the other, he went backwards and forwards and shook his head. Then he said that a certain Rabbi, I have forgotten his name, and anyway it doesn’t matter, said that it might be done after the death of the child. That was all I wanted to know, and now we are going to do it.

“Yes, that’s right, turn your head away. You good people, who want to save the world just by talking to it, are so sensitive! You must turn your heads away and shut your eyes.” Yanek’s hand shook as he held the basin for the doctor, and he wished he had shut his eyes, for he grew faint and sick, and when it was all over he collapsed and sank to the floor.

A dash of cold water over his face, and then he felt the doctor’s hand reaching for his heart, and he was back again in the center of an age-old problem which he thought he could solve by merely saying: “Thus saith the Lord.”



## CHAPTER FIFTEEN: SWEET STRYCHNINE

THE church bells seemed to have reawakened the poppies and tulips, whose root, stalk and leaf had long ago withered, but whose colors ran riot on the Sunday garb of the Slovak peasants, who were being called to worship. Not the colors of the flowers only, but also their graceful forms were embroidered on skirts and waistcoats, on the caps of the married women and on the sheepskin coats of the men; while even their clumsy boots bore traces of the favorite flowers.

The schoolmaster was watching the streams of color from the front room of Pan Finor's house, to which he had been removed, and the torture of living was lightened for him by the fact that he could look out upon the market place, where the coming and going, the buying and selling, the drinking and fighting of Hraszova could be seen. The treacherous disease had made too great progress to yield to the brave fight made against it by Dr. Makutchky, whose gospel of fresh air and sunshine he more than half doubted; or to Christina's tender care and the faith and self-sacrifice which she brought into the struggle. She had just left him and he was not sorry to see her go, for she came accompanied by Yanek who was to preach that morning, and when he saw them together, which seemed to him was always the case, the struggle to live did not seem worth while, especially to-day. They had been together with the dead and the suffering, and he envied them every drear moment of the time. He was retelling himself the stories they had told him, about Pepo's child being carried away in the storm, the finding of the body, and then the terrible

story of the strangled baby in the Redlich home. They were together, which was all that mattered to him; and so some day soon, he thought, they will stand by this bed and look down upon my empty body, and their hands will touch as they minister to me for the last time. "Jealous! Jealous!" he almost shouted, and he struck his aching breast as if to punish himself for his unworthy thoughts.

Yes, how colorful life was this Sunday morning; and he tried to give his thoughts another direction as he watched the procession of church goers, the stream dividing at the market place where Protestants and Catholics sought their own places of worship. There was food for reflection, for each new combination of color spelled geography, creed, position in society, married or single life. To-day the stream seemed especially dense; only at Easter time, and then only on the first day, had he ever seen so many people going to church. He noticed an unusually large number of peasants from the mountain regions, men who were known more for their combativeness than for their piety, and he surmised that the impending trouble had reached their isolated villages and that they had come to church to have a share in wreaking vengeance and hate, rather than to express love and devotion. There wasn't half enough room for them all on the cobblestone sidewalk and they overflowed onto the highway, so that the clouds of dust their clumsy boots had stirred, softened the gay colors but did not blot them out.

Plain, simple folk they were, patient and industrious, not asking much of life, or putting much in, except, and how much that was, that they reproduced their kind, and that with sublime courage they greeted the sunlight with labor, and were still working when it faded from the valley.

This was their weekly reward, the putting on of their gay clothes, spun and woven and adorned by the women for this solemn hour of worship, and after that a little more and better food; then drink and music, dancing, wooing, and mating. That was the round of the Slovak peasant's life, and how gladly the schoolmaster would have exchanged his Latin and Greek poets, his knowledge of history, his skill with trees and flowers, for just one strong, clean breath of air,—and then his fevered cheeks flushed the more,—for one swift and sweet embrace of Christina.

He paid dearly for his exciting thoughts, for he coughed until he would have been glad to cease breathing altogether, if that would have brought release. Some one had come into the room and handed him a glass of water. He thought it was his nurse, whose habit of gossiping in Dr. Finor's kitchen so frequently interfered with her duties. When he opened his eyes he saw Sonya bending over him. "More sunshine," he whispered.

"You are mistaken," she said in assumed severity, "I am a storm cloud," and she brushed aside the rebellious black locks, which had escaped from underneath her broad brimmed hat. "First of all, I am going to scold that nurse of yours for leaving you alone, and then I am going to punish you for your indiscretions, by staying with you this morning; for I am not going to church;" and she proceeded to take off her hat and coat.

The air in the room took on a different quality; it seemed more alive, and the depression vanished from the schoolmaster's mind. Christina brought quiet and peace, and he was resigned to everything when she was with him; but Sonya brought life, the Pagan joy of life, and he began to be rebellious and to chafe against cruel circumstance. His hand stole from under the coverlet and he touched her hair, but quickly withdrew it, for he



felt the quiver of an electric spark, and he thought he heard a crackling sound.

"Thunder and lightning," laughed Sonya, "I told you I was a storm cloud. I am like my black cat when you rub his fur the wrong way."

"I like that kind of storm," and he touched her hair again. "It's gone," he said, "the storm is over!" and his weary hand dropped.

"Schoolmaster, if you like electricity, I will swallow an electric battery the next time I come. I like to be petted; but don't rub me the wrong way, for I am angry clear through, furious at everybody except you."

She was angry with everybody, chiefly with Yanek, for he had noticeably avoided her; and when she met him that Sunday morning (and the meeting was of her planning), he had apologized for what he had done a few mornings ago. He was tired and excited, he said, and he called himself a cad and a fool and a brute, and vowed never again to so forget himself. He begged her not to go to church, and this was just the morning she was going, for he was to preach. She could not understand why he did not want her there, and how could she understand? But when he looked into her face and she met his confused and pleading glance, she reluctantly promised. Of course Christina had to come upon them just then; they were going to church together, stopping on the way to see the schoolmaster.

Sonya was angry with both of them. She wanted to tell Christina that she was a meddling hypocrite, which she knew she was not, and she fairly ached to tell Yanek that she agreed with him. He was a fool; for why didn't he kiss her again, when she loved him as no one ever loved him before, or as she had never loved any one before, which latter might have been nearer the truth. And why did he object to her going to church to hear him



preach, and not object to having Christina there? Of course Christina was a saint, but saints did not need being preached to, while she was a sinner, a very respectable sort of sinner, of course, who needed being preached to—and then she knew how perfectly lovely he would look in a Geneva gown, and she adored Geneva gowns, and hoped that he would always wear one.

She also might have told him what of course she would not, that he was not only a fool, but a very adorable liar; for she knew, and she knew that he knew, that he would embrace her and kiss her again and again. She saw it in his brown eyes, which had turned almost black as he pleaded with her, and she felt it in his vibrant voice. These were the thoughts which chased each other through her busy brain as she swiftly and deftly carried out the instructions which the doctor had left. Her life was not pitched to the Slovak minor key, she had absorbed the more vital and joyous Magyar strain. She loved to speak their sonorous, stilted, stately language, and she danced the *Czardas* with absolute abandonment to its weird and sensuous rhythm. Wherever the Slovak danced the *Czardas* to Gypsy music, there the Magyar triumphed, more than by passing repressive laws. Among Sonya's own class the progress of Magyarization was stayed in part by the pietism which was an historic and temperamental inheritance, but she was immune to its influence. Her father called her a Gypsy. She had the ingratiating manner, the carelessness of the things of yesterday or to-morrow, and like all Gypsies she had the reputation of being a thief, and, needing nothing but love, she stole men's hearts. Unlike the Gypsy, she returned them to their respective owners at more or less regular periods. She began her depredations early, and she stole from rich and poor alike. The heart of the Baron she did not purloin, he tried to force it upon her, and being a Baron and

the son of his father, his record was worse than hers and the effect more disastrous to some of his victims. They had both reached the point of satisfaction at the same time, and he loved her as he thought he had never loved a woman before; while she felt the same way toward Yanek.

"Now what shall I do for you?" she asked after she had in her sketchy way done everything that Christina did so carefully. "Shall I read the Bible to you?" He shook his head negatively, at the same time that she answered her own question with an emphatic: "No, that's Christina's job I know; and then I don't like the Bible anyway. Every decent person in it, except the queen of Sheba, is a Jew, and I hate the Jews." The schoolmaster looked reprovingly at her.

"Yes, of course, I know it is a sin to talk that way; that's what Christina says; but I can't help it, they are a grasping lot, they monopolize everything, even the Bible. Let me read to you from Yokai," and her eyes wandered over the books, but in vain; for the schoolmaster had cleared his shelves of Magyar authors. "I hate Yokai," he said, "because his stories are full of Magyars, just as you hate the Bible because it is full of Jews. Talk to me!" He put his fingers to his lips, for it hurt him to speak. The church bells were almost drowning her voice by their din.

"They are eternally quarreling!" Sonya said petulantly. "The Catholic bells say 'D-i-n-g-! d-o-n-g! Take your time, there is no hurry, the church is open all the day, all the day, all the day.' And then they come down with a bang! 'Be sure you come to this church! Be sure you come to this church! for if you don't you will be damned! damned! damned!'"

"Our bells are in an awful hurry. They say: 'Ding, dong; ding, dong; ding, dong! Church is open once a

week, once a week!’ And then, they sort of die down as if to say: ‘Come if you please, come if you please, come if you please.’ And I should like to go—but I can’t, I mustn’t——”

She did not tell the schoolmaster why she mustn’t. She rattled on: “You are afraid of Christina, aren’t you, schoolmaster? Everybody loves her and is afraid of her.” The feverish cheek of the schoolmaster grew pale and he closed his eyes and fancied he saw Christina bending over him, listening to the words of love he dared not speak. Her sister prattled on.

“They went to church together to-day, and he is going to preach.” He nodded his head; he knew, and it hurt him, because he knew that Sonya knew it hurt him.

“You are jealous of him, aren’t you?” she asked, smiling at him and stroking his hot forehead. “Don’t be jealous.” She whispered it to him, at the same time hiding her head. “And don’t you say anything to anybody about it; you know there is nothing to tell—just now,” she added after a short pause. “But there will be a whole lot to tell some day, only don’t be jealous. Christina loves everybody, and you, schoolmaster, more than anybody else.”

She patted his cheek. “I don’t blame her, for you are dear, and sweet, and good. But I don’t love everybody. I hate the Jews and the peasants, and sometimes I hate Christina, and I love—well, I won’t tell you, you naughty man, whom I love.” Then she drew the cover tightly about his neck and kissed him on the forehead. “I would love you too, schoolmaster, but your heart is mortgaged, there isn’t anything left to love.” Just then the massive head of Dr. Makutchky was thrust in at the door. “I am not disturbing, am I?” he growled.

“I am just about to go,” Sonya replied, “and I am kissing the schoolmaster good-by.” She put on her



hat, and then finding she had her arm in the wrong sleeve of her coat: "You are a horrid man! Why don't you be gallant and help a lady?"

"Because you don't intend to go, and I don't want you to go," replied the doctor, his gruffness modified a good many degrees. "You are as good as a dose of strychnine for my patient."

"Thank you for the compliment, doctor," she said, trailing her coat on the floor as she came close to him; "please paste a label with crossbones and skull on me, so that everybody will be properly warned."

"She is a honey jar, you old bear," the schoolmaster whispered; "and bears like honey," Sonya added, lifting her face temptingly to the doctor; "that is, decent bears do. Old, crabbed bears like you, like——"

"Strychnine, Sonya dear, strychnine; and I do like you. That is," he added cautiously, "I like to see you here with the schoolmaster. Christina lifts him up to Heaven when she comes, and our job is to keep him on Earth; so, Sonya dear, take off your hat. But why aren't you in church?" he asked rather sharply, going about his usual tasks.

"Why aren't *you* in church?" she replied tartly.

"What would become of my patients?"

"You ought to be in church praying for them."

"My patients don't need praying for, except this one, and Christina is doing that. It's the people who are in church who need it," he added, looking out upon the street where the shops were being closed hurriedly, and huddled, anxious Jews were running toward the synagogue.

"They ought to be used to it by this time," the schoolmaster remarked, after the doctor conveyed to them his fears of a riot.

"As we are used to the coming of cholera or of war,"



was the reply. Sonya wanted to know whether he believed that the Jews had killed Susanka. He turned upon her fiercely and called her a stupid goose; for no sensible person would believe such old wives' fables. If she was a stupid goose, then there must be a lot of stupid ganders; for she had heard it from the men, she retorted in her iciest manner.

Dr. Makútky looked critically at the thermometer he had just taken from the lips of his patient, then put his hand to his lips, cautioning Sonya. Three solemn strokes floating in from the Catholic church announced the elevation of the Host, and within a few minutes crowds were hurrying from the sacred portals and the crash of broken glass was heard; while Father Anton Kalman with trembling lips was saying, "*Pax vobiscum.*"

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE RIOT

STEPHAN HRUBY and his wife were sitting in their stiff backed pew, the next to the last, as behooved serving people; for while the Lord is no respecter of persons or of purses, the church accepts the world's judgment as to who shall be the first or the last.

However, the pews were all alike, uncomfortable, the only yielding thing about them being the varnish, the delight of the children, whose fingers and toes had scratched upon it the various symbols of their passing stages, while the minister had left them unimpressed by his "firstlies" and "lastlies." The markings ranged all the way from a pig, done in straight lines, to a heart, exceedingly lean on one side and bulging on the other, into which the perpetrator had cut a sharply pointed dart.

The children who had left their marks were all gone, and Elzabetha Hruby viewed them with melancholy interest, and a smile curved her sad lips as she remembered that the boy who had so often been slapped for attempting to deepen the lines with his penknife, when his finger nails had done the tracing, was now sitting in the pulpit, his head buried in his hands to shut out the world, with which he had become one, and to invoke the Divine power, which he had found elusive and not easily summoned for special occasions. In the midst of her joy at seeing her son in the pulpit, Elzabetha suffered, as all mothers before her have, whose children by growing up have grown away. She suffered a little more keenly; for the joy she felt at seeing her son at his goal, lacked much of being full and unmixed.

She sang the long meter praises sorrowfully, depending upon her husband's reading of the words, and they both dragged the tune, holding on to each note for safety, many beats behind the organ and the patient precentor.

Her husband suffered from the same cause as she, but not in the same way or in the same place, for fathers are not so closely related to their sons, and vanity is not of the heart. After all, having his son back from America was not what Stephan had anticipated. The first day's pride, when every one who saw him (and of course every one had seen him) said: "Who is that elegant looking stranger? It certainly can't be Stephan Hruby's son!" was lost in the disgrace of his arrest, and the fact that it took the special intervention of the Pan to have him invited to preach. He was much too worldly, this reverend son of his, mixing in all sorts of things, arousing the anger of the Baron for beating him at tennis; and what business did he have playing anyway? Now he was deep in this Jew affair. "How can a man be a good Christian," he said to his reverend son, "if he does not hate the Jews?"

These things were bad enough; but here was his arch enemy, Andrew Feher, whom he had invariably beaten at his boasts, by telling of his son in America who was studying to be a minister. He had reminded Stephan that his son was after all only a "Salvesh," and that by being in jail he had rubbed off the little bit of sanctity which might have clung to him. "Any old woman can be a Salvesh preacher," Andrew Feher had said to him, while he chewed his peppered *Slanina* and washed it down with red wine. It did not relieve Stephan's chagrin when he spat in his enemy's face and had told him that even a "Salvesh" was better than being coachman in a Jew house; for Andrew replied that his reverend son was not too proud to eat at the Jew's table, and that he was

running after Jewish women. There was his son now, in the pulpit, and no thrill of pride was running up and down his spine, as he expected; only a sort of fear lest by preaching poorly, Yanek might make a bad matter worse.

The Reverend Geza Kretchmar had reluctantly invited Yanek to occupy his pulpit; for, as he had told the Pan, he was not quite sure that he was properly ordained, and he still had his misgivings. "These Americans," he said, "bring back all sorts of bastard religions. There are Methodists who shout, and Holy Rollers who dance, and Baptists who immerse, and the Salvesh who preach and pray everywhere, and who never mention the true faith, but tell people to be good and abstain from strong drink and from fighting and from licentiousness! As if people could be saved by anything but faith."

"Religions must grow like weeds in America," he said to Yanek as he was helping him into his gown. "At least they grow," he replied, "which is a sign of good soil."

"But they are weeds which choke the pure word of God," rejoined the pastor. Yanek wanted to tell him that even bastard faiths are better than sterile creeds, that the soul of America is young, and alive, and improvable; but he said nothing, for he wanted to enter the sanctuary in peace, and there was enough tumult in his soul.

To him, as to his parents, the moment he had so long anticipated brought no such elation as he expected. No burning coal from a fiery altar had touched his lips. He had struggled with a dozen alluring texts which might give wings to his thoughts, but they hung like lead upon his brain, and there was no Divine heat to melt them into a living stream, and no voice from Heaven commanded him to "cry and spare not." Instead, he was thinking



of what would please Christina most, or what impression he would make upon his parents, of how the brass would sound, or the cymbal tinkle, so that the good people of Hraszova might say: "What a fine preacher Yanek Hruby is! Who would have thought it?"

Yet he had one mastering desire. He wanted to allay the aroused anger of the people. He wanted to borrow strength from Him who cried "Peace" to the storm, and whose words could quiet the tumult of the world. In all the waverings of his young faith he clung close to the divinest of the teachings of Jesus; he saw the summit of the mountain though he lost the foot-hills.

Many a time he had fore-visited this scene. Row upon row of sheepskin-coated peasants; the red coats with white trimmings, and white coats with red trimmings; the red was deeper than he had seen it in his picture, and the white was yellow like straw, like wild poppies in a field of wheat, and there were blue skirts and bluer trousers, like the cornflowers which bordered the fields. The Reverend Geza Kretchmar had spoiled the picture for him by insisting upon putting some Eau de Cologne on his gown; "for our peasants have no art sense in their noses," and so he became conscious of the odor of old leather, and of the acrid taste of wool which assailed his palate, and the stifling scent of garlic, of which a little is such a sure sign of culinary culture, and too much is—merely garlic.

Now he sat in the pulpit. Hanging precariously above the heads of the congregation was the organ loft, where his beloved schoolmaster used to sit, playing the organ while he pumped the bellows, and between the hymns and during the long sermon he would look at the pictures in the magazines the schoolmaster was reading. Later he read them himself, and was not able to wait from one Sabbath to the other to finish the story which at its

most thrilling moment was broken into by the demand for "wind." The hymns were interminable and the organ had the consumption long before the schoolmaster contracted it in prison.

Everything was as he had pictured it, except that the church looked smaller and the bell rope which hung in the vestibule was thinner, and the young had grown old beyond his recognition, and the old people had as many wrinkles as there were new cracks on the whitewashed ceiling. There were children who looked more or less like their parents, as if God could bring forth nothing new out of this human race, which once He had made in His own image; and after all, how could God improve upon Himself?

He felt Christina's presence, though he did not see her, the Pan's and the Baron's pews being right under the shadow of the pulpit. That was well, for after all, she had looked deeper into his divided life than he himself had seen; she had no illusions about him, she knew that he was neither Prophet nor Apostle, only a disciple following "afar off," and she was not quite sure that he would follow far.

His father watched him critically. He did not think that he stepped with sufficiently measured reverence toward the pulpit, and when he opened the Bible to announce his text, and then did not fold his hands over his stomach, as the pastor always did, he was sure that Andrew Feher was right when he said that his son was a "Salvesh."

In his mother's face Yanek saw absolute confidence, undisturbed by the missteps she had seen him take. Her heart was aglow from an anxious anticipation, and when she heard his deep, mellow voice, her lips moved and she was saying to herself, "My golden boy, my golden Yanek!"

The *Babushka* had come in her yellow cart. It was a rare thing to see her in church these days, and her lips were moving and her eyes were fixed upon the preacher as if to say to him, "I am praying for you; just lean hard on God." Her lips were moving in prayer, while he was loosening the knots he had tied around the simple but profound text: "Faith, Hope and Love, and the greatest of these is Love."

Young preachers have always chosen the most beautiful and difficult texts, and it is well so, for their congregations were sure to hear one wise saying often repeated. Yanek saw his mother weeping, when he reminded all the mothers of their love for their children, even when faith in them wavered, and hope had grown dim. Love and love alone kept the fires of the heart warm. "Love," he said, "travels through all space, even over to America, after the boys and girls who may have forgotten their parents." The men looked sober as he reminded them that their love had failed them, but then they were like the Prodigal Son, who was not himself, it was just his lower self running away from home, drawn by his desire for a good time, and his love was confused with passion. He intended to say much upon this point, for it was here that both the men and women had failed most, and the whole trouble that they were facing about the Redlich nurse was due to their not knowing the one from the other. He was preaching to himself most of all, and his voice trembled, and he was glad that he could not see Christina, and that Sonya was not in the church.

His father was most displeased when the preacher told his congregation that love was the greatest thing, even in dealing with animals, and that a good coachman could do more with his horses by kindness than with a curse and the whip. "What's the use reminding his congregation that he is a coachman's son? Doesn't he have any



pride, and what has that to do with religion anyway?" Stephan whispered to Elzabetha.

The men began stiffening their backs so that one could hear the pews creak as they braced themselves against them, when Yanek pleaded with them to meet the problem of Susanka's disappearance with patience; that the Jews were after all God's children and not guilty of such a crime as they imagined, in the name of religion. It was the one moment when he really preached, and did not merely thresh homiletical straw. Here he knew he could speak in God's name; but the more he pleaded, the more restless his congregation grew, and then he became conscious of failure. The one thread to which he held so bravely broke, and like a drowning man who breathed water, so his words came back upon his mind and choked it.

The pastor offered a long, cold, clammy, formal prayer which fell upon the ears of the people like the thin stream of the Hraszova fire hose upon a burning *isba*, doing just as little good; and before the last hymn was sung, half the congregation was at the door, Yanek's own father leading the rabble.

In the Roman Catholic church the congregation was larger. There were fewer worshipers in sheepskin coats, while the court dignitaries and the Captain of Gendarmes gave to the religious atmosphere the official sanction which Father Imre Baczko needed for the nationalistic note in his preaching. Father Kalman was unusually restless under the ordeal, and dissented so visibly that the congregation noticed it, and there was much whispering and questioning as to the cause.

"The old man is beside himself," some of the younger people remarked, "and what a good thing it is that we have this robust, wholesome curate." Once Father Kalman rose from his seat, as if to interrupt the preacher;



but after taking a step, he sat down again. What saved him from committing such an indiscretion was his snuff tobacco box, which was his ever present help in time of trouble. He took a small pinch of snuff to steady his nerves.

"The Jews are a sore spot in the national body!" the preacher cried, pounding the pulpit for emphasis. "Un-assimilated, they maintain their Little Jerusalem in Hungary!" And he called upon St. Stephan and St. Elizabeth, and the other national saints and heroes, to rise from their graves, and save the nation from becoming Slavonized or Judaized. He threw in occasional morsels of the Gospel, as if it were holy water with which he sprinkled a corpse.

"Why, in Heaven's holy name," Father Kalman said to himself, when he had taken his third dose of snuff and had painfully suppressed the natural consequences, "doesn't he talk about chastity? What is there in most cases like Susanka's but just plain lust? Aren't our Slovak women giving themselves to lustful Jews or to the Magyars or to any one else, because they are promised broader laces for their caps, and rustling satins for their skirts, when cotton would become them better? Aren't they all going to the devil as fast as they can?" Then he crossed himself, a pinch of snuff grasped between his badly stained thumb and forefinger. So excited was he that he took the snuff right there in plain sight of the congregation, and sneezed so loud and often that the curate stopped in his harangue and looked reprovingly at his superior.

"You didn't like my sermon, Father," the preacher said haughtily when they met at the door of the sacristy, and his tone indicated that he did not care whether the priest liked it or not. Father Kalman had other things on his mind. He had seen the crowd jostling itself out

of church, and heard the sound of breaking glass, the usual beginning of a "Jew baiting." He was thinking of his dear friend Moritz Redlich, and was eager to go to him. "You know I am a patriot," the curate called after the priest as he swung the door open, not even waiting to take off his vestments. "And *I* am trying to be a Christian," he said to himself, making straight for the house of his friend.

The Slovak is the best natured among the Slavs, if not among all the Europeans. Too simple minded to be shrewd, too kindly to be a consistent hater, his blood runs too slowly through his veins to impel him to fight, unless urged by strong drink or the worse intoxication induced by the mob. "Live and let live" isn't one of his mottoes. He is perfectly willing to let live, he does not even ask for a living, and as a consequence he has always been badly exploited by the shrewder Jew and the more masterful Magyar. On this particular Sunday, however, he was a fighter, for his blood had been stirred by religious and national fanaticism; but he was not out to kill. He broke windows, drank the Jew's *Palenka*, purloined from the dramshops, and pulled the beards of those Jews who were not quick enough to seek the shelter of the syagogue. In front of Sandor Redlich's house the crowd was densest and yelled itself hoarse, demanding the body of Susanka, while calling the Jews the worst name they knew: "Christ killers."

Inside the house the family surrounded Rosa's bedside. The bereaved young mother lay dying, and the groaning relatives stood helplessly by, watching Moritz Redlich, the only one among them who had retained his senses. He had recovered his strength miraculously, his cough seemed to have vanished and he was, as usual, the prop upon which they all leaned. His wife was prostrate on a couch, whimpering and calling upon God to

stay His vengeance, confessing every one's sins but her own.

Father Kalman was making his way through the crowd outside, pleading, unheard and unheeded, as he slowly advanced, holding up his crucifix, the passport of his self-sacrificing soul. Reaching the barred door he stood, with cross uplifted, facing the mob which slowly yielded to the mute appeal, and made its way to the synagogue behind whose sacred walls the Jews were calling upon Jehovah to be their shelter in this time of storm.

Yanek and Christina were at the edge of the crowd among the few who wanted to do something to help, but did not know what. "Look!" cried Yanek, pointing to the old *Starychek* whom he had learned to know in his first encounter with the law. He was standing on top of the synagogue wall, seemingly oblivious to the clods of earth thrown at him, and holding up a wet garment which he waved frantically. Yanek caught his meaning and called for silence; the name of Susanka was heard, and then Dr. Makutchky sprang upon the wall, and reluctantly the peasants grew quiet. The doctor told them that the body of Susanka had been found by the *Starychek*. At that, the howling began again and the mob rushed upon him.

The doctor shouted: "She was found drowned in the river, and there was no mark of violence upon her!"

"How much money did the Jews pay you to say that?" some one shouted at him. He evidently was a stranger, for no one who knew the doctor would accuse him of ever having done anything either good or evil, for money.

The people listened as he pleaded with them to disperse and go home. The force of the mob being broken at the edges, it began to loosen, then the center gave way, and though there was much muttering about the



"Salvesh" who spoiled a perfectly good "Jew baiting," and a few more stones were thrown into the already broken windows, order was soon restored.

That Sunday evening was the quietest in a great many years; for there was no dance, the inns remained closed, and now that everything was over, the gendarmes patrolled the streets.

About midnight Rosa Redlich followed her baby into the great beyond. Closest to her was Father Anton Kalman, who laid his hands upon her forehead, which seemed to soothe her. In the next room was Pan Yan Szenitzky, silent before the great mystery, but holding his sobbing, broken hearted comrade in his arms.

Stephan Hruby went to his hard bed after a quarrel with his wife, whom he accused of having spoiled her son. "If he were not a minister, though a mighty poor one he is, I would slap his face for that "Salvesh" sermon. Any old *Baba* could talk such mushy stuff! What is the use of his having studied so many years if all he could talk about is how to take care of horses and how mothers love their children? There wasn't a word of sound doctrine in the whole sermon."

Elzabetha knew that the best thing to do at such a time was to say nothing; so the old man went to sleep, while Yanek walked up and down in front of the *isba* waiting till his parents were asleep, for he did not care to meet them after his dismal failure of the morning. He was hungry, yet he did not touch the food his mother had left on the kitchen table. He undressed in the dark and climbed into his bed. He could not rest, for he kept preaching his sermon over and over, try as he might to drive it from his brain.

Suddenly his mother called: "*Sinyitchku muy*, why don't you sleep?" He did not reply. Then he heard her bare feet upon the floor, and she crept into his bed.



Putting her arms around him, she pressed him close and said again and again, "You are right my son! You preached a golden sermon. The greatest of these *is* love." He kissed her and said: "Yes, mother, 'Love never faileth.' "

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: *MATER DOLOROSA*

**I**N Hraszova news wasn't news if it was not bad news; unless some one won the first prize in the lottery, or a young swain married one of the servant girls he had seduced, or the train from Trnava came in on time; things which never happened and were not likely to happen in Hraszova. There had been news enough lately to break the monotony of the shortening days; news which made the old women weep, and the old men shake their heads, and the young people run unnecessary errands, so that they might be able to say: "And did you hear the news?" But the news of this day was really news, bad news, the very worst, though it had been long expected; and on that cold, raw October day there were sorrowful groups of people standing at the broad gateway of Attorney Finor's house, looking up to the schoolmaster's windows, not saying anything, for in that anxious pause between life and death, even the loose tongues of Hraszova's news-hungry population were still.

Every one who passed stopped, until the crowd grew so great that the protector of the law, the Captain of Gendarmes, sent an officer to investigate as to whether the assembling of so many people was not against paragraph this or that. He found that they were absolutely silent, which made him the more suspicious; so he ascended the steps and knocked at the door. Dr. Makutchky opened it and told him to tell the Captain that the people were "waiting till the Hungarian Government had finished executing the schoolmaster," and he

closed the door so quickly that the officer hardly had time to withdraw his waxed mustachios.

Very soon two gendarmes with their bayonets fixed to their guns, began walking up and down in front of the house, driving the crowd from the sidewalk, under the pretext that traffic was interfered with. "Traffic indeed! Who cared to go anywhere, anyway, a day like this?" the crowd seemed to say. "We have come to watch a great soul take its flight, and what is buying and selling, or getting bread from the bake oven, or even chopping wood for the winter, which is at the door?"

The peasants stopped their ox teams, and the *fiacre* and omnibus which were going to meet the ten o'clock train stayed until the drivers heard the whistles echoing in the *Bashanyitza*, and then they drove reluctantly away, saying a mute good-by, as they looked at the tightly closed windows, upon which all eyes were fixed.

Up there, was a deeper silence still. Nothing was heard but the spasmodic breathing of the dying schoolmaster. His eyes were half closed, and seemed to look within, as if he were watching his dying, and his awakening in the other world.

Yanek who was sitting at the foot of the bed, was reminded of the flickering candle which he used to watch burning to the end; the wavering wick swimming in the melted tallow, almost drowned by it, then righting itself, flaring up for a moment, and again swimming toward the darkness.

Christina, looking more than ever like the *Mater Dolorosa*, was close to the schoolmaster, his head supported by her arm, his hand clasped in hers. She was suffering, but there was a smile upon her face; for if he recognized her, she wanted him to see that she still had faith and confidence in that Pilot who meant so much to her, and whom she had vainly urged on him for his

guidance. Perhaps God would grant him one more moment of grace, and at every quiver of his eyelids she looked longingly at him, waiting for recognition. At last it came, like the sun breaking through a hopeless storm cloud. His body trembled from the surge of new life, the tense muscles relaxed and he smiled with infinite content. He thought he had been dreaming, he whispered, and now he knew his dream was true. They were really married, and he pressed his face close against her arm to feel its warmth, and his look grew radiant, as if he had achieved his heart's desire. She put her arms around him and kissed his forehead, and he drew her to him, while a little color stole into his cheek, as if he were half ashamed of this first embrace.

Then he saw Yanek and the doctor and the bowl of ice beside his bed, and a great fear crept into his face, and he cried: "*Mater Dolorosa!*" His body grew tense, he fell back like an arrow shot into the air, and the short, sweet dream was over. A few moments later when Yanek had taken Christina from the room, the doctor opened the window and called down to the waiting people that the schoolmaster was no more, and there was a sigh as if breathed by one person, and the silence was broken.

"He was my best friend," one of the weeping crowd said, and then another and another repeated the same thing; for he was every one's best friend, and could the trees have spoken they would have added their testimony, for to them as well as to humanity he had brought the finer strains of life. Not all the men or all the trees had responded to his treatment and there were enough wild trees left and enough coarse, crude human nature still to be improved; but he was one of the few men who had passed away, leaving his small world a little better, and the sum of good a little larger.



All day long and through the night, the gendarmes passed up and down the street, on guard; for the good and the great are more perilous to the brutal State dead, than living.

The news of the schoolmaster's death had traveled quickly, and when it became known that delegations of Slovak societies were preparing to come to the funeral, a public funeral was forbidden. Wenzel Motichka, the Bohemian candymaker, who was going from house to house under cover of darkness, urging the Slovaks to make a demonstration against the government by appearing at the funeral, had not gone very far till he was arrested; but others took up the work, and Hraszova was seething from rebellion. All sorts of plans were made to outwit the powers, and the more people were arrested, the more determined grew the opposition.

Yanek and Attorney Finor were watching beside the dead, Dr. Makutchky having joined them at midnight. They were drinking coffee and discussing the Slovak's chances of political freedom. "You will get it very soon," the doctor said; "for God has denied governments the gift of wisdom, in spite of Solomon's prayer for it. The one means of governments for achieving their ends is force, and that begets force. When you Slovaks have your own government you will put your sons into uniforms and make them carry guns and oppress other people.

"Of course your soldiers will have uniforms of a different color," he continued, not heeding Attorney Finor's interruption; "but they will shoot with the same kind of guns. The guns of all governments are the same. Some may shoot a little quicker but all of them shoot straight. You will put other men who oppose you into prison and the men whom the people call patriots, you will call traitors.

"Our schoolmaster was a great man, not because he was a good Slovak, but because he was a broad minded human being."

"But what would you have us do?" Dr. Finor asked impatiently. "Would you have us bend our backs before our masters when they smite us?"

"Well," he replied, looking at the shrouded body of the schoolmaster; "I would, after all, rather be the smitten than the smiter. You can afford to wait God's time; for He works very methodically."

"The master class stops breeding its own kind; it leaves that to the inferior people. Slovaks have three children to the Magyar's one. I have had five cases of apoplexy in two years among young, virile Magyars who gorged themselves with meat and wine and hardened their arteries by excesses. If the schoolmaster had stuck to the children and to the trees and had let politics alone he would be living to-day, and there would really have been a wedding, and children—and such children!"

He was walking up and down the room in his nervous way, shooting his sentences at them as if they were bullets, which they were, and he was aiming them especially at Yanek, who knew that they were aimed at him.

"Parliamentary election and Pan Yan Szenitzky," the doctor replied with a mild sneer, when Yanek offered his excuse for meddling in politics; "what will come of it, say that you elect him, what will come of it? There will be a torchlight procession and much fine talk, and the old man will go to Budapest, and sit there and listen to long speeches, and he will vote as others persuade him to vote. At best you will have another law or two on the statute book, and more work for the lawyers. I beg your pardon, Mr. Attorney," he said to Dr. Finor, "but for Heaven's sake, let this poor man rest in peace, and don't drag a dead man into your politics."

"You are a hopeless idealist," Dr. Finor replied, and he said it rather cynically.

"No," retorted the doctor, "I am a very commonplace realist, a doctor can't be anything else; but I am a very hopeful Christian. You'll have your Slovak kingdom in a few years, or a republic or something else; but I know that some day there will be only one Kingdom upon the Earth. I am so sure of it, that I am willing to let you do your squabbling and fighting about language and boundaries, while I will do my fighting with dirt and drink, and evil living and ignorance of the laws of God."

"Can't we do both?" Yanek asked, his opposition aroused by the doctor's dogmatic attitude. "Can't we give to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's and to God that which is God's?"

"That's a very good text for my sermon, Mr. Theologue; but not for yours. Give to the Romans all that's theirs; pay taxes, obey their laws where they do not come in conflict with the law of God, and give to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's; but you are about to give to Cæsar that which is God's."

"Doctor, you don't want me not to be a patriot because I am a minister?" Yanek cried, louder than he should have, in that room.

"Pst, young man! Don't get excited, and let's not quarrel here," the doctor said, looking at the body of their friend. "I don't say that you should not love the place in which you were born, or the people of whose blood you are, or the country in which you live. Do you hear them out there? That's the Roman guard changing the watch. It is two thousand years since they began doing that; they were afraid then of the dead whom they had crucified, and they are still afraid.

"Fear, envy and hate kept the soldiers marching up



and down by the tomb of Jesus. They did not watch because they loved. Those who loved, came with spices and ointments, and not with bullets and bayonets."

"He is a crazy Tolstoyan!" Attorney Finor said after the doctor had left them. "He is doing a lot of good and a lot of harm, but that kind of doctrine is not very catching."

"It isn't a cheap doctrine," Yanek replied, looking abstractedly into the empty cup before him. "It isn't a cheap doctrine." He repeated it as if he had not heard himself saying it the first time. He had toyed with that same doctrine; nearly all Christians have, who find Jesus in the Gospels and not in the Old Testament, and the kingdoms of this world have remained the kingdoms of this world because it is *not* a cheap doctrine.

There was to be no funeral procession for the schoolmaster, by order of the Captain of Gendarmes. No crape was to hang on any door, not even on the schoolhouse door, and it was not to be worn by any one not entitled to wear it. That was hard on the drygoods dealers and harder on the oaktrees, for they were stripped of their sear foliage which was worn by every Slovak man, woman and child. There was no funeral sermon; that too was forbidden. Just the services for the dead, chanted in a dull monotone, by the Lutheran minister.

Three women followed closest to the casket; Christina, Sonya and Yanek's mother, and there were three old men; Sanctus Spiritus and Company and that was the last time the people of Hraszova saw them walking together. It happened strangely that all the oxtteams of the entire region seemed to be coming from the beet fields at the time of the burial. They were loaded to the top and covered with tarpaulins, because it threatened rain, and sugar beets must not get wet. The wagons stopped at the cemetery, just as the sad little procession



reached the gate, and then (of course it just happened so), and then—"Yes, Pan Capitan," one of the gendarmes reported to his superior; "then the tarpaulins were thrown back, and there were all the delegations from all around, and half the male population of Hraszova, carrying banners draped with oak leaves, and they stood up and sang the national Slovak anthem. "What should one do in such a case, Pan Capitan?" Yes, indeed, what *should* one do?

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE GOVERNMENT STRIKES

A prophet is a man who sees things too soon. His picture is true in outline, but false in focus. The mental atmosphere in which he lives, is so rarified, that he does not realize how far away the mountains are, and he expects humanity to climb them while it is yet on the plains.

They who foretold the golden day of Internationalism mistook a bright star for the dawn, and they did not see the thick darkness between. There will be dawn and a golden morrow, but at the time of the Hraszova election, in that faraway corner of the earth, nationalism was rampant, and men were spilling blood over the colors of their bunting, and taking the lives of those who would not pronounce their shibboleth.

"Hey there, take down that flag!" A mob was shouting in front of a straw-thatched *isba*, from which waved the flag of a nation yet to be born. Mobs are impatient and as the "red rooster" climbed slowly over the weather stained thatch, his feathers changed from red to gold, a suffocating smoke rose from his beak, and he spewed flames all over the peaceful dwelling. The bells from the church steeple rang the alarm, and the fire engine came and threw its thin, ineffective stream over the abode of an innocent family; while the mob gleefully cried: "The rooster is swimming!"

Feather beds, the treasure of the Slovak household, were carried gently out, crockery was hurled from the window, and frightened women and children ran hither and thither, as the patriots went to another *isba*, where their

demand did not have to be repeated; for the offending flag had been withdrawn, and the hoisting of the loyal colors, saved that *isba* from the attack of the "red rooster." Another mob, a Slovak mob, changed the colors over night, and beat the offending householder because he was not loyal to the cause.

It is the day before the election. The Gypsies play lively tunes. *Palenka* is served the crowd in glasses decorated in the colors of Hungary, charming ladies pin red, white and green cockades onto the hats of the men, and tie ribbons of the same colors on the arms of the children. An orator has climbed the railing which fences in the benign patron saint of the town, and loudly proclaims the virtues of the Magyar candidate. "Vote for the government's candidate! A vote for Pan Yan Szenitzky is a vote for the Russians, who are only waiting on the border to make you all subjects of the Czar. Your land, your Christian faith, your liberty are at stake! *Elyen! Elyen!* Long live Hungary!" and everybody shouts "*Elyen!*" For the more *Elyens*, the more drinks.

If the voters of Hraszova had been individually asked what they wanted their deputy to Parliament to accomplish, they would have replied: "We want cheap meat and bread, fewer taxes and good schools, and to the devil with your fear of the Pan-Slavs!"

But, notwithstanding the doctrine of economic determinism, the mass of men cannot be inflamed by matters which concern the stomach; they must have something to hate, or to love, that alone welds them and makes them either the tool of demagogues or the instruments of the saviors of a country.

Back of Pan Vavra's butcher shop there was much drinking of puckery wine and fanning the flames of patriotism while plans were made to outwit the govern-

ment party. Most likely the bridges to the north would be burned, so they found the safe places to ford, and notified their constituents. The whole proceeding was much too mild for the Czech firebrand, Wenzel Motichka. He wanted the Magyars called by their right names: "Asiatic hordes, decadent descendants of the Huns, robbers of Slovak cradles and betrayers of Slovak virgins." There was a lively tilt between him and Yanek, who still had faith in truth, and hated exaggerations. He wanted the campaign so conducted that their enemies could not accuse them on the pretext of having interfered with their sacred paragraphs. "He is an American, he knows," Pan Brunovsky said, and the magic word America silenced Wenzel's vitriolic opposition.

The Slovak platform was very moderate. It demanded manhood suffrage, freedom of the press and a Slovak secondary school. If governments had wisdom, which Dr. Makutchky doubted, the Slovak's demands would have been granted, and they would have asked for nothing more; but as no miracles happen in government circles, they were strenuously opposed and labelled "Pan-Slavistic Propaganda." Had they asked for another town pump or a new fire engine the request would have been labelled the same way.

Yanek had traveled from village to village, eluding the gendarmes and outwitting the spies, by going about dressed in peasant clothes, sleeping in *isbas* and working by the side of the peasants in the woods as they were chopping their winter's wood.

What simple and kindly people they were, not knowing much besides reading and writing, and often they had forgotten the little they had learned in the schools. They were wretchedly poor because they were paying for the pageantry of the courts, whose pomp they had never seen, and they were suffering from past wars, in which



victory or defeat brought them nothing but more taxes.

"Yes, yes," was their invariable reply; "but everything is growing dearer, even our *Palenka* is taxed till it has become a luxury to most of us. Will Pan Yan Szenitzky, when he gets to Budapest, reduce the taxes?"

Yanek won more votes than Attorney Finor and all the other eloquent firebrands put together, because he was from America; for in every *isba* he found those who had been there or who had kinsmen over the seas. What a bond of fellowship that was! It seemed as if a new world order could be created out of the experience of humanity in the New World, and perhaps it will serve that purpose when the day dawns which will make a new order possible.

"You talk like an American," they all said, and by that they meant that he did not lose his temper when he talked about the Magyars, that he had tried to be fair, and how could he help that, after having lived in America where he had seen only the best of the New World?

Indeed he was a Slovak, but not such a one as Dr. Finor, or those patriots who gathered back of Pan Vavra's butcher shop. Something in his love was different, because by loving America he had stepped over the narrow fringe of nationalism.

After all, the most valuable thing that America gave him was the sense of a larger communion with mankind. He realized this, in his electioneering tour. He could not curse the Magyars or the Germans as the real patriots did, and his election speeches lacked the spice of hate. He could persuade, but the cursing he had to leave to others. Sometimes, especially when he was sharing an *isba* with grown ups and children through the night, or when he had to spoon the soup out of a common bowl, he realized how divided his life was, in his tastes, his

loyalty, even in his love. He loved Christina as he loved America, with a spiritual passion, quite free from the taint of the flesh. His love for Sonya was like his love for his native land, "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh."

He had spoken but little to Christina since the schoolmaster's funeral; to try to comfort her would have been sacrilegious, to talk of commonplaces would have been no less so. She took no interest in her father's candidacy, and once or twice when he consulted her she gave him an evasive answer.

Sonya was sobered by the schoolmaster's death, and pouted because the approaching election put her in a different position, socially. Her father became the bugaboo of Pan-Slavism among her Magyar associates, and when she appeared at any social gathering, there was a quick shifting in the conversation, which became the more apparent the more skillfully it was done. Nationalism divides more than race or religion, and for the first time she knew what it meant to be regarded as something foreign, something she ought not to be; yet could not help being.

She was born of Slovak parents, and how could she help that? She spoke Magyar like a native, she could out-dance them all in the *Czardas*, but that was of no avail now. Her name ended in *sky*, and that separated her from the sheep. "Very well then," she said, "have it your way, I am a goat. I am a Slovak till the election is over;" so day after day she rode on horseback from village to village bearing the Slovak colors, talking to the peasants by the wayside, cuddling their children, going after the richer landowners and persuading them that it was their duty to vote for her father. She had an exciting race one day with the young Baron who was riding by her side, talking sweet nothings to her and

trying to persuade her that she was jeopardizing her social future by her public activities for the Slovak cause. "Of course, I know you want to go to Budapest to live; very well, marry me and you shall live in Budapest." "Joan of Arc was not married," she replied, with a laugh, "and I am going to save Slovakland, as she saved France," and with that she gave her horse the reins. It leaped forward, and a merry chase it was as far as the village of Szotina. There her horse passed the tollgate ahead of the Baron, and the stupid tollkeeper let down the bars just in time to give the full impact to his galloping horse, with the result that the tollgate was in splinters, and from the hilltop Sonya waved the colors of Slovakland at him as he limped after his maimed horse. When she told Yanek of the incident, she said: "Of course, I am Joan of Arc only till after my father is elected;" and she looked at him again in that strangely challenging way, and again his brown eyes grew black as coals, and his hand trembled as he took hers to kiss it; which was not just what Sonya had expected.

The Magyars had the music and the drink, the orators and the gendarmes to aid them in winning the parliamentary seat for their candidate. The Slovaks had only one thing, a righteous cause. Had they been left alone and the *sky* in their names been unchallenged; had they been permitted to speak their Slovak dialect without its being considered a crime, and had the names of their towns not been Magyarized, they would have remained the same patient, docile, industrious people who had always paid their taxes without complaint, and who might have been proud to be part of a nation which sought the good of its people, regardless of their race or speech.

As it was, they had a cause, and the cause was made for them by a government which lacked wisdom. No



people have ever been assimilated by force, and when the pressure began, the peasants said to each other, "What is this? We must not teach the Slovak language in our schools? Well, language must be something worth having if they want to take it away from us; but we won't let them."

So they came to this election with a cause to champion. They knew that their way would be obstructed; in fact, the bridges were burned, but they forded the river and the creeks and were in Hraszova before daybreak. Long before they arrived, however, a regiment of infantry had marched into town, had encircled the square, and divided it into two parts by a wall of soldiers. The right half of the square was for all those who were to vote for the government candidate, and the other was for the opposition. It so happened that the inn and the town pump were on the side used for the government; the other side was dry and was meant to remain so. Before the villagers entered into their respective sides, they were harangued and threatened and bribed, and quite naturally the right side grew at the expense of the left. At noon the town's people of Hraszova came to the square and the majority entered the dry, left side, carrying liquid and solid refreshments for the faithful.

Emissaries from the right were allowed to enter the camp of the opposition, and they kidnapped many a voter, not, however, without fights which the soldiers tried to quell, thus increasing the tense feeling which made the usually quiet market square resemble a battlefield. On the right side the Gypsies played patriotic airs; while on the left, the peasants tried to drown them with Slovak songs.

The election had divided households and even churches, and Father Anton Kalman entered the Slovak camp; while the curate, Father Imre Baczko, was one of the chief



orators for the government. "Pan-Slavism," he shouted across the guarded line, so that his senior could hear it, "is anti-Christian, and every Catholic who votes for Pan Yan Szenitzky not only votes for a Protestant, but he votes for the heathenish Russian faith; for the Pan-Slavists are paid emissaries of Russia." Pan-Slavism was a good label with which to libel a cause. It is an old trick, to make a good cause odious. Father Anton Kalman made no speeches. He waited his time and voted, and would have gone his way, but for the fact that no one was permitted to leave till the votes were counted.

In the Redlich household there was also division. Moritz Redlich being a manufacturer and landowner had two votes, and his sons besought him not to vote for the opposition; the government had to be supported. Their father replied that if Pan Yan Szenitzky were opposing the Almighty, he would vote for him, not to say anything of his opposing the Hungarian Government party, of which he did not have too good an opinion anyway. Moritz Redlich's example acted contagiously on a number of the Jews, and they walked into the left half of the square, in spite of the fact that the government always counted on them. "We stand between you and the mob, we give you certain privileges and you have to support us;" and they usually did.

As the afternoon was passing the vote stood fairly even; at about four o'clock a belated delegation came from the mountain district. The men had to come in afoot, for the narrow road was blocked at one point by a small landslide, which the Divine Providence or some other power had arranged, to insure Count Arranyi's election. When the peasants came marching across the market place the command was given by the district judge not to let them enter the square, or at least to detain them till the closing of the polls. The judge should have

known better; for the *Kopanyitchary* are born fighters, and when they were told that they could not enter, they attempted to force the line. Yanek and Dr. Finor tried to dissuade them, but they faced the pointed bayonets as if they were the thorn trees which had no terror for their tough skins. "Let us through!" they shouted and hurled themselves against the line, only to be driven back, again and again. The minutes were precious. There was anxious consultation between the leaders. Father Anton Kalman was seen hurrying toward his church, which bounded one side of that part of the square allotted to the opposition. The *Kopanyitchary* retreated, and in a few minutes were seen emerging from the door of the church, having been admitted in the rear. Seeing this, Father Baczko rushed across the dividing line toward the church, the soldiers following him, but they arrived just as the *Kopanyitchary* entered the booth and cast their ballots.

A shout of victory arose from the Slovaks, the Gypsies were leaving the inn, for it would be unprofitable to remain with the losers. Enthusiastic partisans lifted Pan Yan Szenitzky on their shoulders and carried him to his home, the crowd surging after them. Sonya in her joy danced about like the Gypsy she was. The servants rushed in to kiss their master's hand, and he scattered small coin to the paupers and beggars who had gathered around the house.

His face was flushed, the blood raced in triumph through his veins, as he saw himself ascending the speaker's place in the Parliament and heard himself thundering against sugar beets and emigration. Just then they noticed Yanek running breathlessly. "We have lost!" he shouted. "The vote of the *Kopanyitchary* was thrown out! We have lost!" A groan rose from the crowd, then changed into an angry scream,

and they saw the old man, the pride and hope of Slovakia, rise and lift his hand as if to restrain them. Then the world seemed to stop moving; for his hand still raised, he fell back, unconscious.

"It is a stroke," Dr. Makutchky said, when they had undressed him and put him to bed; "it is a stroke, and he can never strike back."

"But *I will!*" Sonya almost shrieked. Then she threw herself down beside her father and cried as if her heart would break.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN: WHEN THE SAW SINGS

THE Slovaks lost the election; but their cause gained a new impetus, for the most indifferent felt the hurt of it, the dull eyed and visionless saw a new gleam, and in Pan Vavra's wine shop, over sour wine, they pledged their life's blood to a redeemed Slovakland. Dead men do speak, and it was the schoolmaster who inspired them, and the stricken Pan struck back, though his body was paralyzed and his tongue was dumb.

Prime Ministers have never been cooks, else they would know that holding the lid over a boiling pot does not keep it from boiling over, and the Captain of Gendarmes, the sergeants, corporals and armed men who never asked for reasons, continued to hold down the lid; while the broth of their own brewing was boiling and bubbling, singing a dangerous tune. Instead of putting out the fire, they added fuel to the flame. Funerals and weddings, baptisms and names' day festivities were watched for signs of disloyalty, and the innocent joys of life were made sinister by spying and searchings, by warrants and jailing.

The government did not know what to do with Yanek. The easiest thing would have been to deport him to America; but he was not a citizen of the United States. When he heard of the suggestion which was made by the Judge, to send him back, he thought that after all it would be the best thing, for he was lost in the current. His chart which had such straight lines when he arrived at home was full of crooked byways, and his compass acted like an alarm clock going off, pointing everywhere and nowhere; until between the "lo here and lo there," he knew not the way.



"Chart and Compass come from Thee," he heard himself singing in the college chapel; but was Jesus a pilot in a storm which swept a nation? How did He act when His country was held in such a thrall as this, by the Romans? Did He lift the fallen Maccabean banner and bid men fight for the liberation of their country? Or, knowing that a worse foe than the Romans held them, did he not hurl his condemnation against the Pharisees, and fight them with the only weapon which could overcome them?

"The truth shall make you free." Of course the *Starychek* and his followers, and the dear *Babushka* loved when everybody hated, and "blessed those who cursed them"; they knew the chart, and their compass was steadily pointing Christward. What did they care who ruled in Slovakland, when Jesus was so soon to return to earth in glory?

But they were reading their chart literally, and he had been taught to take into account historic currents and the beliefs of the times. He sometimes feared that he had neither chart nor compass; but merely a beautiful ideal for which men should strive, though hopeless of attaining it.

Nevertheless, the "Salvesh" loved to hear him preach, perhaps because his message was tender and sweet, and he used many pretty illustrations, garnered without labor from the sermons of American evangelists, whose thoughts he repeated in a more or less conscious plagiarism, of which they themselves were perhaps not guiltless. In fact the "Salvesh" were the only congregation he had, and when his permanent appointment as a missionary came from the Board, and with it numerous lean and empty blanks, hungry for statistics, he hesitated in accepting it, and returned the check for his first quarter's salary. He vibrated unhappily between Vavra's wine shop and

the "Salvesh" meetings, between patriotism and religion, and between his adoration of Christina and his passion for Sonya.

If the compass ever became steady it pointed westward, and there arose a longing in his heart to go back to the United States; for while he was less than "a million leagues" away from his people, he was still far enough away not to feel at home in the place where he was born. A man's true Fatherland, after all, is where his spirit had its new birth, and he felt the pull of it tugging at his heart. The motives for his wishing to go back were much more mixed than he was willing to admit, but America's vast spaces and hospitable ways, her broad sympathies, the freedom of being just what one was, the generous friends who smoothed his way so unselfishly, were powerful factors which lured him back. Then, too, he missed access to good books and fine music which the college and the seminary had afforded him, and although he blushed to own it, even to himself, he longed for the easy chairs and porcelain bathtubs, and all those other comforts which were lacking in this small and poverty stricken corner of the world.

Thus the winter passed, and on the evening of a reluctant spring day he was sitting with his mother after his father had gone to the inn. He was not sorry to see him go, for he had grown very petulant, and very critical of his son. There were many unholy quarrels between them, in which Yanek was not altogether blameless, and they were drifting farther and farther apart.

Yanek was reading to his mother one of Christina's simple stories. "*Mamushka*, do you like this story?" he asked, after he had finished the little volume. "Certainly I like it," she said, wiping the tears from her eyes; "it is so real.

"*Mlada Panka* Christina's books are like our *isba*. A

man comes to see us and he opens the door, and there he sees us just as we are; the bake oven and the dishes and the bed; and he knows right away whether we are thrifty or shiftless or whether we love the Lord or not.

"The other books you have been reading to me are like going to the Pan's house. You have to ring the door bell, and the maid comes and says: 'Who are you?' and you tell her; 'and whom do you want to see?' And then you tell her that too. Then she lets you stand for a long time in the hall and then she comes and tells you that the Pan will see you. Then you step into another room, and you have to wait, and you look at the fine furniture and the books and the pictures, and finally the Pan comes, and he says: 'Oh yes, I think I can tell you all about it, come with me into the parlor.' Then he begins to talk to you, and even then you don't know just what kind of man the Pan is, and only when you go out and shut the door you say to yourself: 'Well, I think the Pan is a pretty nice man.' That's the way it is with your fine books; but in Christina's stories, on the first page, you say, 'I have seen that man before, and I like him,' or you say, 'What a terrible creature he is!'"

Wouldn't his professor of literature delight in that criticism, and could he have done any better? Yanek thought, caressing his mother and calling her pet names.

The critics in Budapest had said practically the same thing about Christina's stories, only in a less simple way. They objected to them because they were too religious, and because all her drunkards and wife-beaters and atheists were converted. The publishers refused to print them; but a Tract Society took them, and colporteurs and missionaries carried them and their message of eternal faith in the power of God and the redeemableness of man, to the humblest *isba*.

"Read me another story," Elzabetha begged, but he



had not gone very far when he stopped; for it was about a boy who had gone to America, and the lure of the New World, described by her, was as if written out of his own experience. "*Mamushka*," he said, "what would you say if I went back to America?"

"May Heaven forbid!" she replied, rising from her chair. Then she sank slowly back, and began to cry, and told him how she had dreamed about his coming back, and how her old age became golden with the hope of their living together till she went to her grave; but that she thought it might after all be better for him to go back. He knew it would be best, but he did not want her to say it, and it hurt him.

"Have you talked it over with the *Mlada Panka* Christina?" she asked, hoping that he would say he had not; for she wanted to be first in the confidence of her son. He told her that she was the first person to whom he had said anything about it, though the thought had been long in his heart; but he would go over and see Christina at once.

It seemed but yesterday since he had gone to her on the same kind of errand, only then he was fifteen and wore a sheepskin coat. Marisha had come to the door at his knock and told him that he ought to know better than to disturb his betters at that time of night, and she made him scrape his boots when he had already scraped them as hard as his impatience to see Christina permitted. He stood first on one leg and then on the other and he stammered when he asked her whether she would be sorry to see him go to America.

Sorry, of course she would be sorry to see him go; and then his young heart nearly melted within him, and she cried, and he held back his tears because he had no handkerchief, and when the tears came in spite of him, she lent him hers. A dainty, sweet smelling handkerchief



it was, full of tiny holes along the edges, and he twisted it around his fingers and the tears ran down unchecked.

That peasant boy with his first, warm, tender love was very different from the young man who went to her this evening, confused and perplexed. He was ushered into her presence by the same Marisha who would not have dared tell him to scrape his boots, though they had needed it. He had put on his best American clothes, and was as different from the little *Yanushek* of fifteen years ago as this sedate looking young woman, bending over her desk and scarcely looking up when he entered, was, from the little Christina who cried as if her heart would break when she saw him weeping, and had untwisted her handkerchief from his fingers, that she might wipe her tears.

When Yanek was announced, Christina was writing. Yanek thought her looking more than ever like the *Mater Dolorosa*. Her fair hair, and the pallor of her sad face were accentuated by contrast with the mourning which she wore for the schoolmaster. She withdrew herself with difficulty from the world in which she felt like a God; creating, destroying and saving—a joy given only to the real artist. When Yanek told her of his desire to go back to America and asked her advice, her answer was a question.

“Have you asked Sonya?” She was sorry after she had spoken, for there was a trace of bitterness in the words.

“You are hurting your eyes,” he remarked as he saw her bending over her manuscript. That was not what he meant to say, and he was not thinking of her eyes when he said it.

“When you come back again from America I shall be wearing thick spectacles,” she said with a smile, though there was no smile in her heart; “and you will call me *Babushka*,” and she tried to take her thoughts away from

Yanek and his destiny, back to the story she was writing, about a lonely old Jew, whom she had named Simon Klempner, who was being cared for by a devout Christian lad who came, no one knew just from where. He was regarded as not having all his wits, because he never drank *Palenka*, nor swore, and always turned the smitten cheek. The old Jew thought that it was an angel who made his fire for him in the cold, winter mornings, and sawed the wood for him. Who else but an angel would do it?

Seeing her eyes on her manuscript, "Do your stories always end as you want them to?" he asked, still thinking of other things.

"Yes," she replied very deliberately. "It is in the middle that I have the greatest difficulty. There, my characters go their own way, and no matter how hard I try, they do what they want. Isn't it that way in life," she added; "after all, the story ends as God wills."

"How do we know when we are doing God's will or our own?" he asked. She urged him to sit down, for she wanted to read him something she had written which might be an answer to his question. It seemed strange, she said, that he should have asked her that question, just when she was writing that story, and she read: "Simon, the youth said to the old Jew, who looked at him in astonishment, seeing him sawing a heavy log in his woodshed; for it was, after all, not an angel who came from Heaven, but a *goy*, a common *goy*. Simon, I am doing God's will."

"How do you know you are doing God's will?" the Jew asked, in a singsong way, as if he were asking a learned Rabbi to solve one of the pious riddles of the law.

"How does your horse know when it does your will? You pull it hit, and then ho!, and when the horse doesn't

feel you pulling it, when the bit doesn't hurt, then it is going just where you want it to go." The Jew smacked his lips over this wise saying, and the youth continued.

"Do you hear the saw? It is singing. This morning I was in a hurry and I began to push the saw without thinking. After a while the pulling became harder and harder, and the saw kept saying: 'It is hard work, it is hard work, I can't go further.' Then I pulled it out and I saw that I had started it crooked. I put my thumb on the log for a mark, and I laid the saw straight up against it. I didn't push the saw hard, I just said to myself, 'keep on straight, just perfectly straight,' and very soon the saw began to sing, for it was sawing straight. That's the way you know when you are doing God's will, when the bit doesn't hurt, and when your heart sings; and my heart has been singing within me every time I did this little chore for you."

"Does your heart sing, Yanek?" Christina asked, putting the pages back on her desk. He did not know what to answer; he felt the reins pulling first hit, and then ho, as if the driver himself did not know just where he wanted his horse to go. Thanking Christina he left her to see the Pan, and Sonya, who was reading to him. When the old man saw Yanek enter he scowled and growled as if he meant to say: "You young jackanapes, why under Heaven didn't you stay over in America? Then none of this trouble would have come upon me."

Sonya had no such thoughts. There was warm welcome in her outstretched hands, which he kissed fervently, more so than necessary, the old man was saying to himself, and mentally he was striking half a dozen matches on his leather breeches. The two young people had gone to the side of the room where he could not see them. His eyes fell on his *Dresdenska*, and as he realized that he could never light it again he kept on growl-

ing, saying to himself: "Why does an old, half alive carcass like mine cumber the ground?" And his eyes still lingered on his beloved *Dresdenska*. Then he stopped growling, for he heard Yanek say: "Sonya, what would you say if I were going back to America?" He didn't hear her reply, for she did not answer him in words, but Yanek knew very well what she meant to say. The silence continued so long that the Pan began to growl again, and Yanek bade him good night.

When he reached home his father was asleep, but his mother was waiting for him as usual. He saw the question in her eyes, and said joyfully, "*Mamushka*, I am not going back to America yet, and when I go I shall not go alone." Then his mother fell upon his neck crying: "As God wills, my golden boy, as God wills!"



## CHAPTER TWENTY: THE MAGIC SENTENCE

EVERY day except Saturdays and Sundays, rain or shine, Sanctus and Spiritus walked to the Pan's house. There they stayed till Christina came in with Marisha, bringing them their galoshes. Marisha helped them on with them, and then the two old men walked home again. This afternoon, as every other, the Pan came in leaning on his two daughters, who seated him in the stuffed chair between his cronies. His pipe was out of commission and hung over his desk, with other momentos of happier days, a sad reminder of pleasure no more to be tasted.

As always, the talk was of the *Bashanyitza* and the pheasants, the rabbits and the rheumatism; and they agreed upon everything, for with them it took three to make a quarrel, and the Pan's quarreling days were over. Only one side of his face could smile, and his tongue was completely paralyzed. Half his body was dead though his mind was alive. If only he could have spoken! But a thick gurgling sound when he was angry, and a smile of pleasure or approval, were his only means of expression.

"It is no fun, getting old," Moritz Redlich said with a sigh, thinking himself back to the time when they were young boys and waded together in the creek and cut willows for whistles.

"Youth is the time," Father Anton said meditatively, looking at the pathetic figure of their crony; and then furtively gazing at the picture of Madam Szenitzky, he thought of the days when a young girl's face thrilled him. Mentally he crossed himself and murmured,

"Holy Mary, intercede for me!" He could smell violets, for they had gathered violets together, he and she, whose picture hung on the wall, and every time he saw it he smelled violets. She found ten to his one, for he was not thinking of flowers, but of her delicate hands. "O Lord, have mercy on a poor sinner!" And when she put them into his buttonhole he trembled from head to foot. Then he went where there was incense but no violets, and he had been an old man ever since; an old man with just a crabbed old housekeeper to take care of him, and, since his niece, the only young part of him, had gone away to the convent to school, he had nothing but a snuff tobacco box to comfort him, and a curate! "May the devil take the curate!"

"They are talking about youth, those two old rascals," the Pan was saying to himself. "What do they know about youth?" And he thought of the cherry lips from which he had snatched kisses, and the wooing of many maidens and then a bit of clear, pure Heaven. Yes, he had been an old man for a long time, with two daughters on his hands, and the coming of the Sugar Trust and emigration to worry him. "But oh, you fortunate ones! You have your old carcasses intact, while half of me is watching the other half die. What do you know about old age? You have your limbs and your tongues, and I am like a bass viol without strings!" But he could still growl, and that was the way he quarreled with them.

Father Kalman was growing forgetful. He did not know in which pocket he had the snuff tobacco box with the Greek goddess, and he handed Moritz the one with the bleeding heart of the Christ. Then he apologized profusely.

"Never mind, Anton," his friend replied, taking a bigger dose than usual; "it is all right," and he sneezed

so hard that the tears came into his eyes. However, the tears came from the bleeding heart more than from the snuff.

"The trouble with your Jesus," he said, looking at the picture of the calm, sad man, "is that He did not grow old. What did He know about shrinking day after day into a bundle of skin and bones, with His memory failing, and His heart getting heavier and heavier? God the Father is an Old Man and He has children. He understands us better."

Father Kalman put the snuff box into his pocket, making a mental note that it was the right side into which he put it; for he was vexed with himself for having made the mistake. He rarely discussed religion with his friend, but he could not let his Jesus suffer in comparison with God the Father, and he told the Jew how Jesus loved little children and took them into His arms to bless them.

"Yes, yes, I know that's in your Bible and it is very pretty, but they were little children. It is no trick to love little children. I wouldn't think much of any man who did not love little children. But, Anton, if they had been His children, and had grown old enough to steal from Him, and lie to Him and come home vile from the touch of harlots, would He still have blessed them?" Then Father Kalman told him the story of the prodigal son to show how He felt toward the wayward.

"Of course, Anton, you know just how Jesus felt, for you two are in the same boat, but neither of you knows anything about it. All the children of Hraszova are yours. They call you Father, and they come to your confessional and tell you, 'I have lied, Father Anton, I have stolen, I have walked with wicked women,' and you say to them, 'In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost your sins are forgiven.' But my own boys don't come confessing. I catch them stealing and lying



and doing worse things, and then I smite my own breast and I cry out to God to forgive me, for I have sinned. That is what hurts, and of that, neither you nor your Jesus knows anything."

"You are mistaken, Moritz," Father Anton replied with deep grief in his voice. "I suffer in the same way. I smite my breast and cry out *mea culpa*, and when I pray that God may forgive their sins, I am praying for myself as well as for them, for they are a part of me, if not of my body yet of my heart."

"Yes, it may be so. I think I understand, for the Jew has always suffered for the sins of others; but there is a sweetness in that kind of suffering, a long, lasting sweetness; it is different."

Pan Yan Szenitzky was growing restless; there they were, his cronies, having a start for a good quarrel and he could not have a share in it. "Suffering, what do they know about suffering? As long as you have a safety valve and can talk about your pain, and there is some one to listen to you, it is all right," he was saying to them, though they heard only a loud, long growl. "Here I am, my thoughts working in me like gas in a barrel, all bunged and sealed, and all you can hear is my growling." He growled so loud, that Christina heard him in the adjoining room, so she came in with Marisha who carried the galoshes, a gentle reminder that it was time for them to go.

Father Anton rose slowly, a sharp pain shot up his back, and he straightened himself with a jerk. "You old rascal, you can smile at my rheumatism! Well, I am glad something amuses you," he said to Pan Yan Szenitzky, in mock anger.

"Moritz is getting more hunchbacked every day," the Pan said to himself, watching how the old man, when he rose from the chair, was not much taller than when he



was sitting. "I guess he has a heavy enough pack to carry."

Indeed his pack was becoming heavier every day. His daughter had been ill and in bed, ever since the school-master died. Dr. Lonyai said it was only a cold, but as she grew worse and worse, her father sent for Dr. Makutchky. He shook his head, and when Dr. Makutchky shook his head every one knew that the matter was serious. He threw the medicine out of the window, which he had opened wide, and began fighting incipient tuberculosis.

The two friends missed the music of the leather breeches as they walked home together, and the people they met on the streets did not say any more, with a sort of good natured smile, "There go Sanctus Spiritus and Company," but: "Why, under the sun, does Father Kalman walk with that old Jew, the Christ killer?" He felt that more than any of his sorrows. Ever since Susanka's death they hated him and he knew it, and shrank from their angry looks. Even the Jews, many of them, did not bow to him and say to each other, "There goes our good old Moritz."

"Who knows what they are saying?" Sensitive as he was, he imagined worse things than they did say.

"Anton, I can't bear this much longer! My troubles rush to my head and beat against my brain and tell me to end it all, and I choke till I can feel my breath leaving my body."

"Holy Mary! Jesus! and Joseph!" the Father murmured, when he should have said: "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!" The two walked up and down the slushy street comforting one another, for Father Anton's troubles were increasing. He had received a letter from his bishop, inclosing a complaint from the Minister of Worship, censuring him for taking active part against

the government at the election, and who knew where that might lead? And then Helena, his darling Helena, wanted to come home to her uncle and there was no home to come to. "The curate, the curate, may the devil—— Oh Lord! forgive me," he murmured. The watchman was calling the hour of eight when Father Kalman remembered that he would be scolded by his housekeeper for letting his supper grow cold, and all for talking to an old Jew.

When Moritz Redlich reached home he found the Fräulein and the Herr Ritter in the parlor. It was good of them to come to sing to Sophie, but he hated the very sight of them and hardly spoke as he passed into Sophie's bedroom.

This was his evening's diversion, sitting beside his daughter's bed and talking to her. She was his child, the child of his heart; she was so much like Gittele that even the agony of seeing her suffer had the consolation of his seeming to be again with his wife.

"Daddykin, how is Pan Yan Szenitzky, and tell me, what did Sonya wear, and do you think she will marry Yanek?" These were her usual questions. To-night she startled him by a new one. "Daddykin, what will happen to you when I die?"

"You mustn't talk that way, silly girl; you will get well and be married, for otherwise what would happen to the fine linen which your dear mother began saving for you? Look!" and he drew the dower chest from the corner, and took out the embroidered linen sheets and pillow cases and the dozens of damask towels and napkins. "Not even a princess has finer linen!" And he spread it out, all over her bed, then folded the things again, so careful to leave them in the original creases.

Sophie watched him with a faraway look, and then

said: "Father dear, tell me, where do the Jews go when they die?"

"Ah," he said impatiently, "that is in God's hands. Why don't you ask where do the Jewish brides go on their honeymoon? You will go to Vienna and live at the Hotel Royal and you will go with your husband to the opera and then you will go shopping on the *Kaertner Strasse*. Silly girl, you mustn't talk that way. Look at me. I have been coughing for forty years and here I am yet, and I will live to see your children playing in your home. The first one will be a girl and you will name her Gittele after your dear mother, and the next one will be a boy and you will name him for my father, and the third one you can name after me, for then I shall be gone."

"Do you know, father, whom I should like to marry?" she asked wistfully. "I know you won't like it. I should like to marry Yanek. No, no, fatherkin, don't get excited. I know I can't. He wouldn't marry a Jewess, but ever since we were children together I have loved him."

"A nice minister's wife you would make!" her father said laughing. "A Jewish girl a minister's wife, who ever heard of it?"

"Father dear," and she took hold of his hand and he felt her trembling all over, "promise me that if I do get well, you won't make me marry Dr. Lonyai."

"Not as long as I am alive," he said and cuddled her in his arms and kissed her. Then he said to himself: "Yes, it hurts, this thing of being a father, and yet I wouldn't be such a father as Anton, who has no children of his own." He paced up and down the room looking at his child, his sick child, a part of himself, the best part of him and of Gittele.

"Do you know why the Fräulein comes here every

evening?" she asked him just as he had steadied his heart with the joy of having his child. "I suppose she comes to sing to you."

"No, no, fatherkin, you are mistaken. She comes here because she likes to be with the Herr Ritter. I have watched them when they thought my eyes were closed, and I saw them kissing each other."

"Ah yes, the Herr Ritter!" He had almost forgotten that the Herr Ritter and the Fräulein were in the next room.

"The Herr Ritter," he repeated. He was beginning to cough again, for he was thinking not only of his wife who was so little his that he had ceased to care about Herr Ritter's devotion to her; he was thinking of the brewery and the stock company and the worried looks of his son, and his evasive answers when he asked him how business was going. He still went to the distillery every morning, but it was like visiting his own grave. There was nothing left of the old, peaceful place. Workmen were rushing hither and thither, and barrels were being piled mountain high, as if all the beer of Hungary was to be brewed there. The new granaries were overflowing from barley, and carloads of hops came from Bohemia. Wagons were being made and painted red, white and green, and huge presses and copper vats were installed. The worst of it was, that the people came from all around and insisted upon investing their savings in stock. The curling smoke which rose from the tall chimneys drew the money out of their pockets, and his sons took it and did not look far into the future.

The Herr Ritter was at the bottom of it, for when he asked his sons just why this was so or that was not so, the invariable reply was: "What do you understand of big business? The times are changing. Herr Ritter knows better than you do." The Herr Ritter owned



everything, his wife, his sons and the brewery; but who owned his good name, the name of Moritz Redlich?

That very day, Mina Barkeles, the glazier's widow, came and brought two hundred and fifty *crowns* and insisted upon buying stock. "Herr Redlich," she said, weeping as she held out the money, "it is all I have left. Thirty years my sainted husband went from village to village with his box of glass. The rheumatism he had, and a back round, like a loaf of rye bread. Now he is dead and this is all I have left. Put it in the brewery for me."

Moritz refused to take it, and she grew abusive; for she had a sharp tongue. "You won't take my money, my honest money? You alone want to get rich! May you choke on your money! Why can't you give a poor widow a chance? They tell me that you shovel in your money by the bagful every night. What are you going to do with it when you die? You want to take it with you? And your wife, she will marry the *goy* who is running after her and they will spend your money, they won't even buy you a decent stone for your grave, you hard hearted man!" He had to drive her out of his office, and when she reached the street, she was still abusing him.

The Bohemian brewer came in immediately after and told him that he had something disagreeable to tell him, he hated to do it but the Pan Sandor wouldn't listen to him and he felt that he had to tell some one. "The beer will not keep the way it is being made, I know it. If we could sell it now it would be all right, but Herr Ritter does not understand the difference in the climate, and the nature of the water." The Bohemian continued, that when he told all this to the Herr Ritter, he replied that it was nothing but the Bohemian's desire to discredit him and that he was a Pan-Slav.

Poor Moritz Redlich was thinking of all this as he walked nervously up and down. The beating in his head began and he felt the choking hand on his throat. Just then the Fräulein in the next room played a soft strange tune, and she sang so tenderly and in a voice so full of pathos, that he could not believe that it was she. It was an American song he was sure, and it sounded as if there was joy in its sadness, as if flowers were blooming in the winter time. "Over there in America it is fine, everything is fine," muttered the old man as he kissed Sophie good night.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: THE GREAT CATASTROPHE

THE peasants had plowed their fields and now ribbons of gentle green turned thicker and darker, the beet fields were thinned, and men and women, looking like four footed animals, were bent between the far stretching rows, weeding them and stirring the earth. The promenaders on the *Esplanade* were saying to each other: "How fine the rye looks, and how high the wheat has grown, and how well the sugar beets show! *Chvala Bohu!*" God be praised. They did not know whether it would be a good harvest or not, there was destruction in the clouds, when the hail came clattering down, like wild horses trampling out the hope of harvest. But after all, they knew that when they sowed wheat they would reap the same, when they planted beets they should not pull horse radish, and that from the seed of corn they garnered corn, more or less, "*Chvala Bohu.*"

"It is so different with this life of ours," the wise people of Hraszova were saying, shaking their heads and thinking of Moritz Redlich, what he sowed and what he reaped, and how "the Good Book, the Lord forgive us, is mistaken; for he sowed good wheat and reaped cockle burrs and wild peas, and hemp, and may the Lord grant peace to his troubled soul!"

At the big brewery it was as silent as over there by the *Esplanade*, where the dead slept, partitioned off behind those iron fences. The tall new chimney was but slightly discolored by smoke, like a young beard on the face of a boy; beneath it the boilers were cold, the fires were dead, and the new engines of glistening steel and

shining brass looked like paralyzed giants. A sour, foul smell hung over the place, and in the gutters ran a colored fluid, causing the peasants to shake their heads over such waste.

Standing empty in the deserted yard were the brightly painted carts, red and white and green, which were to carry in triumph the Hungarian beer, so superior to that brewed in Bohemia, while the sparrows' quarreling over scattered grains of barley seemed like an echo of the strife among men. The doors of the brewery were sealed and the windows barred; the last scene of the last act had been played and the spiders were already weaving the curtain.

A few days ago an automobile came honking into Hraszova. The oxen under their heavy yokes reared as if struck by a goad, then resumed their peaceful plodding; the drivers jumped to the sidewalk as if a cannon ball were flying past them, then scratched their heads and watched the blinding cloud of dust, vocal, as if thunder were rising from the earth, and wondered whether the end of the world had really come, as the "Salvesh" predicted.

The car stopped at the brewery, causing no small commotion, and became the center of the curious. Excited voices were heard in the office. The Bohemian brewer was summoned, and Herr Ritter came soon after. "Pan-Slav!" and "German pig!" and other well worn epithets were being hurled into the quarrel. The men who came in the automobile walked across the yard, then into the cellars, from which they retreated in haste. They ran up and down the stairs of the malt house, looked into the yeast presses, and when they returned to the office, they locked themselves in and examined the books. Then this coroner's jury, sent by the banks from Budapest, declared: "The Hungarian National Distilling and Brewing Company, dead. Cause, criminal carelessness."



Criminal patriotism would have been nearer the truth, but who would have dared say it and who would have known what it meant?

“Bankrupt!” The word sped through the brewery in an incredibly short time, the pistons of the engines stopped midway, the great wheel revolved a few times, carried by its own momentum, the whistle blew mournfully, for the last time, and the workmen came running to the office, clamoring for their pay.

The idlers who had gathered round the automobile caught the fatal word, and carried it through the town, where the news fell from their lips like frost upon tender stalks. Doors were opened and no one thought of shutting them; there was a clatter of boots and the patter of bare feet as men and women ran breathlessly to the brewery as if they were running to a fire, eager to save something from destruction. Armed gendarmes met them at the closed gates, and then their feeling became vocal as they called for Moritz Redlich, then for his sons and Herr Ritter; but no one responded. The mob increased and pressed against the unyielding gendarmes. Finding itself balked, it turned, as a snake turns, and moved with incredible swiftness to Moritz Redlich’s house.

Mina Barkeles, the glazier’s widow, was the head of the serpent, and her lying tongue led in accusation against the old man. “Robber of widows and orphans, may the apoplexy strike you half dead, and leave the other half to live in torment, to see the ruin you have brought on us! My precious money, my husband’s hard earnings—give me back my money which you lured from me!” She did not say that Moritz Redlich had refused to take her money and that she carried it to the office and gave it to his son, who gave her in return a piece of colored paper which she had taken home, shaking her fist at the old man who “refused to share his profits with a poor widow.”

Old, toothless men took up the curses and the shrill voices of children joined in the lament. In the midst of the clamor a window was opened and Moritz Redlich appeared, his face gray as if mourners' ashes had been scattered over it. He tried to speak and his voice was drowned by the storm, the storm which was sweeping away his good name.

A madness seized him and he began emptying his pockets and throwing the contents into the maw of the serpent; he tore the watch and chain from his vest, and the serpent squirmed, and curled, and twisted, and almost devoured itself. Again and again he came to the window. He had torn the curtains from the doorways with his aching teeth, till his gums were bleeding, and he flung the rich hangings down upon the street; he pulled costly pictures from the walls, and hurled them into the crowd. A big, bentwood rocking chair, his wife's throne of vanity, followed; yet the people shrieked and cursed, unsatisfied.

He turned from the window and the screaming voice of his wife was heard, but the mob had no pity, and he faced it again and cried: "Take this, and this! Take it all!" And he flung down his wife's diamond necklace which he had torn from her jewel-box, and the rings he had wrenched from her fingers. For a moment he stood there, facing the serpent, and still it squirmed and hissed. Then he dragged a chest to the window, Sophie's dower chest, and he threw out the damask napkins and the fine linen sheets and all the dainty embroideries which were destined for her bridal; Gittele's treasures for her child. His heart grew sick as he saw them trampled and crumpled under the dirty feet of the people as they snatched them from one another, still cursing his good name, the good name of Moritz Redlich.

"What more do you want?" he yelled at them, and

they did not heed or answer. "Do you want my life? Take it, but give me back my good name!"

What did they care, and why should they care for his good name, with all their savings gone and the spoiled beer running in the gutters, and the bank officials sealing the doors of the brewery? He looked for pity and there was none. No one remembered Moritz Redlich, the staff and stay of the poor, the comforter of the mourners, the benefactor of widows and orphans. They kept on cursing his good name.

"Take it then!" he cried hoarsely, his voice unheard by the frenzied creatures and sounding to him like the voice of another man whom he would save but could not, and there, before the rabble, he began to choke himself, till his face grew red and his eyes stood out in their sockets.

Delicate hands were trying to unloose his grip upon his throat. Sophie had risen from her bed, and flushed by fever, was struggling before them all, with her desperate father. At the sight the serpent did not hiss, for it became human again, and Mina Barkeles, the glazier's widow, began wiping her eyes and saying: "Poor Moritz! poor Moritz!" and she beat her breast, for she knew she had sinned against him. The men and women dropped the booty they had snatched, and walked home, weeping and lamenting for their lost money, but no longer cursing the good name of Moritz Redlich.

All day he lay on his bed like a dead man, the nervous twitching of his body being the only sign of life. Dr. Makutchky was there and other friends gathered round his bed, but he did not know them. Father Anton Kalman held the cold hand of his comrade and tried to pray, but he could only repeat over and over again: "Poor Moritz! Poor friend! Poor Moritz!"

Christina came with offers of financial aid from her



father, but Attorney Finor said it was useless, the firm was dead.

Yanek and Sonya sat by Sophie's bedside, and when Christina came there and saw them she quickly left the room. Her heart ached, not only because it was the first time her place at the side of the suffering had been usurped; she was thinking of the last time she and Yanek shared together the woe of another. The memory of the dying moments of her beloved, the martyred schoolmaster, brought such anguish that she almost cried out in her agony, and dared not enter Madam Redlich's room as she had intended, but hurried back to the Pan.

The Madam lay upon her bed and beside her stood Dr. Makutchky. She was deathly sick, she told him, and complained bitterly, saying that this disgrace would kill her—yet the doctor noticed that she wore a very elaborate negligée and had given coquettish touches to her hair, things of which those who are "deathly sick" scarcely think. "What a calamity!" she wailed. "My dear Moritz! I must see my dear Moritz!" Wouldn't the doctor carry her to see him, for she was unable to walk.

"Madam," he said to her in his dry, hard way, "there are two sick people in this house and not three and if you want to see your husband you will have to walk to him." He was tempted to tell her of the irreparable wrong she had done to the good name of Moritz Redlich, but he might as well have reproached a muddy pond for drowning a man. Finding herself unable to move the doctor, she rose from her bed and simulating pain, walked to her husband's room, and throwing herself upon his bed, embraced him and begged his forgiveness for all her sins. He stirred uneasily, then his eyes opened and she was held by his look as if fascinated, until with a cry of real anguish she slipped to the floor, and snatching his unresponsive hand kissed it and called him all the sweet



names she had wasted on other men. The sons had come in and were glad that their father was asleep. Guiltily they hurried out again, fearful that he might waken.

The servants walked about on tiptoe, callers came and went, doors creaked, the Madam sobbed hysterically and still the old man slept. Dr. Makutchky had left powders to be given him if he should wake, and he emphasized the need of keeping a close watch upon him.

Madam Redlich stayed, crouched on the floor, till midnight. Once or twice she thought her husband's eyes had opened and she rose and offered him the powders, but he lay almost motionless, except for his groaning and the twitching of his body. Her maid came in and urged her to go to bed, offering to watch the rest of the night, but the Madam insisted upon staying, and the servant lay down upon the couch, to be near her mistress in case of need. In the outer room Andrew Feher was sitting smoking, an additional guard for the night.

Madam Redlich's head was throbbing painfully, for indeed it had been a dreadful day. She looked at herself in the mirror, and was frightened at her own face, for an old woman stared at her, a wrecked, old woman. The maid heard her mistress moving about and began to talk to her of the events of the day, perhaps for the pleasure of causing more pain.

"Did the Madam know that her sons had been indicted? *Strashno, strashno!* terrible, terrible. The Bohemian brewer has been arrested." "It served him right," thought the Madam, for wasn't he really the cause of all the trouble? It was all Pan-Slav propaganda, this wrecking of an Hungarian brewery; that is what the Herr Ritter always said to her, that everything was due to Pan-Slav propaganda, and her thoughts wandered away from her husband and her troubles, to the Herr Ritter, and the shame of it all was a sort of comfort to

her. Now that everything was going, perhaps the Herr Ritter——

“Does the Madam know that the Herr Ritter left town this afternoon in Lindner’s omnibus?” Then her heart stood still and she almost cried out, but stifled the cry before it left her lips. “And,” the servant continued, “the Fräulein went with him. What a *Schkandal!*” the girl repeated to herself, mimicking the Fräulein.

The servant had fallen asleep, and the Madam was lying across the bed at her husband’s feet. Her head was aching as if a thousand hammers were beating against it. Sophie called from the other room and she answered and reassured her about her father. Then everything grew quiet again, even her head ceased aching. There was just a humming and buzzing in her ears. She was awake she told herself, of course she was awake. How could she sleep a night like this?

Moritz Redlich had watched them with the cunning of the demented. He slid noiselessly to the floor, and in his night clothes, ran out, past the snoring Andrew Feher, into the street. The watchman was calling the fourth hour, and daylight had crept into the sky. Gentle and sweet and rosy it looked, as on those days when he had to drive to the market in Trnava, with his wagon full of plum brandy. The earth smelled just as fresh as then, and the pale stars twinkled as they used to twinkle at the young boy who had taken an old man’s burden upon him, and had never laid it down.

Yes, he must go to the distillery now and load up. Strange that the men were not yet there, and the horses had to be fed. Those lazy drivers! But what did they care for the scolding of a young boy, though he was their master?

“That’s the Pan’s house, I know it by the rosemary. I wonder if the young Pan, when he comes back from the

*Gymnasium*, will still remember his Jewish playmate. They do seem so proud, when they come back from school."

There was the distillery, a heavy burden for a young boy; but look! There were huge creatures on each side of it and one of them had a long neck and a small head. "Get off!" he yelled. "Don't crush my father's distillery! Don't you know that it is full of plum brandy, and that I have to take it to the market, to Trnava?"

But the beasts did not move, and the huge neck of the one seemed to lengthen in defiance, and its little bearded face smiled at him sarcastically.

"Get away from my little distillery!" he cried again, and was about to hurl a rock at it, when a finger was stretched out from the Sun; a long, thin, shining finger, and it moved over the buildings and stopped, pointing at the big sign which he began spelling out. The Hungarian National Distilling and Brewing Company. The rock dropped from his hand and he knew what day it was which was dawning.

Good God! What a day he had lived to see! And the gentle gold of the dawn grew suddenly red, like blood, and he saw nothing but the Herr Ritter letting down the plain, little sign, Moritz Redlich, Distiller. There it was, hanging by a rope! Moritz Redlich hanging by a rope! He would tear down the big Magyar sign they had put up there, the big glittering sign, in an alien tongue. Where could he find a ladder? There by the barns outside the brewery he found one and dragged it across the silent street and lifted it with superhuman strength. He tied a stout rope around the sign and began pulling and tearing at it but it would not yield; it was all done, fixed, forever and ever! He stood up there beating his head with his hands, for the madness was filling it, and the familiar voice was calling to him to end it all, but he



must live! "God, righteous God!" he cried, "how can I leave my Sophie in this misery?" But the hands kept clutching at his throat, and the voice repeated its demand.

There was a word that had saved him many a time, what was it? "Oh God, the word! the word! What is it?" He knew it had something to do with buttoning and unbuttoning his coat; but when he unbuttoned his night shirt he felt cold and shivered. If he could only think of the word!

In the yard of the brewery from which he was locked out, he heard footsteps. Iron heels were striking the cobblestones. There were two men, and they were talking to each other. They were the night watchmen finishing their rounds and making ready to go home. They were talking about him, and cursing the "Jewish money grabbers," who brought so much ruin to the town so that their good job was gone.

"I don't care," he heard one of them say as he stood listening. "I planned to go to America anyway. They all say that in America it is fine."

Thank God! Thank God! He had the word. "In America it is fine," and he began to repeat it—"In America"—he had not finished the magic sentence when the other man said: "You are a big fool if you go. In America it is not fine, it is bad. I have been there, and I am thankful that I brought home my carcass. My lungs were eaten out by dust and my skin was parched by the heat, and my back is bent by hard labor. It is not fine in America, it is bad, bad!" He began to cough and spat upon the ground and muttered a curse as they passed on toward the big gate.

Poor Moritz Redlich! He had the magic word but it did not work its charm. The voice urged him, the madness conquered him, the unseen hands were upon his



throat, and he sank into the great abyss and into the saving silence.

A few minutes later, from the big gate of the brewery, the two men saw something which looked like a long pendulum swinging from the golden sign. "Damn my soul!" said the one who had been in America. "That looks like a man!" The other one crossed himself and whispered, awestruck: "Jesus! Marie and Joseph! If it isn't the old Jew!"

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: SPIRITUS MORTUUS

THE death of Moritz Redlich dulled the despair which had gripped the people of Hraszova. The curses died on their lips and in their pity of themselves they could now include the old man, whose suffering was over. As his naked body lay on the floor in his darkened bedroom, the pious men of the Burial Society who had come to prepare it for the grave disputed as to whether they should cover him with the shroud which every pious Jew wears at his wedding and on the great holy days to remind him that in "the midst of life we are in death." After some argument they yielded their scruples and the flowing white garment was wrapped around him. Stitched as it had been by Gittele's hands and embroidered in gold by her fingers, it brought him comfort, if comfort from human hands could reach him.

There were neither candles nor flowers to lighten the gloom, nor signs nor symbols to dull the sting of death and defy the victory of the grave. Father Anton Kalman sent a wreath of cornflowers and poppies, and when it was brought in there was much shaking of heads and discussion of custom and proprieties. When it was decided that it might be accepted, but not placed upon the bier, Sophie laid it on the piano. The wise men shook their heads the more when they read the words painted on the ribbons: "I am distressed for thee, my brother. Thou hast been very pleasant to me. Thy love was wonderful, passing the love of women." As it was written in Hebrew, there was mild approval mingled with the doubts of the most orthodox.

When the pall-bearers lifted the bier upon their shoul-

ders, Madam Redlich threw herself in their way, and filled the air with her lament. Those who restrained her were saying to themselves and to each other: "Had she smiled upon him more while he was living, she would have less need to weep now." Gently they pushed her aside, and passing through the crowd which had gathered around the door, they headed the procession. The sons who had been released on bail, followed the body, not daring to lift their heads. When the beadle came and with his knife cut the lapels of their coats, symbolizing the rending of their garments, they bowed themselves low, more in shame than in sorrow.

In disorder and confusion the crowd followed, joining in a chant which combined the despair of Job and the hope of David, but which was without measure or rhythm. No women were there. They remained at the Redlich home to add to the confusion and lamentation, or stood in huddled groups by their doorways, thinking the deep solemn thoughts which death invokes.

Sophie, weakened by her long illness, and exhausted by grief, had been persuaded to return to her bed, by Christina, who sat beside her, thinking anxiously of her father, whom she had left very reluctantly. Sonya realizing her own limitations as never before and feeling that she could not take Christina's place, had begged her to come. Sophie loved Christina, whose mere presence so soothed her that in spite of the wailing of the women below, she fell asleep soon after her beloved father had been taken to his last resting-place. Then Christina stole quietly out and ran home.

Pan Yan Szenitzky had watched from his window the stir caused by the failure of the Redlich brewery, and growled until they told him what had happened; then tears trickled down his cheeks and they could not move him from the window till the street grew quiet. He

spent a sleepless night, and in the morning as his daughters were leading him to prayers Marisha burst into the room screaming: "May the *Pan Boch* have mercy on us, the old Jew has hung himself!" The Pan gave her an uncomprehending look, then the awful truth seemed to force itself into his brain, and he threw up his one living hand as if to invoke help from on high. Even as he lifted it they saw it stiffen, his whole body grew rigid, and they knew, and he knew, that he would soon follow his friend. At the time of the funeral, as Yanek and Sonya sat by his couch, they read his unuttered wish in his appealing eyes; so they placed him by the window when the procession passed. He looked the pain which he could not express, and there were tears which no one could see, and a loving eulogy which no one could hear.

As the pall-bearers approached the parsonage the bell of the Catholic church began to toll, and Father Anton Kalman stepped out. As the men made way for him, the bell suddenly stopped ringing, the last stroke was broken and vibrated unfinished through the air. Father Kalman looked perplexedly up to the church steeple, then joined the dolorous procession. He walked close to the pall-bearers, closer than Moritz Redlich's sons, and as it is the custom of the Jews to permit all those who wish it to share in the blessing which comes from carrying the dead to their last resting-place, they let Father Kalman in beneath the bier, where the burden was lightest, and even then they tried not to let it rest too heavily on his shoulders.

Drear and dismal was the God's acre to which they carried the body of Moritz Redlich. No trees shaded the sun-baked slope, and weeds grew unchecked, hiding the sunken headstones which leaned at all angles, as if weary of their long vigil. The rusty gate hung slack upon its hinges and had long ago ceased to swing wide for those



who entered. They had dug his grave close to the wall, where those sleep, who have not bided God's time, and in the memory of that generation, this was the first body to lie thus dishonored; for the Jew is tenacious of life, and fears his offended Maker.

Up there upon the hillside Moritz Redlich had helped to lay away Gittele's body, over eighteen years before, and he had bought the lot that he might lie beside her. This was a privilege denied him, and from his faraway and sunken corner there was not even a glimpse of the shining stone of marble which he had placed there in her memory.

Yet nature, which man considers stern and unrelenting, was more forgiving than he and gave a gracious touch to the desolate spot. A plum tree growing on the other side of the wall reached its branches across, promising to shade and shelter the grave. In the autumn the rich blue plums would fall upon it, and what was more beautiful than blue plums to Moritz Redlich?

Clumsily they lowered his body into the grave, and when the ropes were withdrawn the sexton descended into the grave to perform the last solemn rite.

Reb Aaron Mandl was the sexton and the almoner of the Jews of Hraszova, an Israelite in whom there was "no guile." The professional *schnorrers* feared him, but the poor loved and trusted him. He never asked anything for himself, but he could beg for others as if he were asking for his own life. While the righteous are never forsaken, God often keeps them on close rations, and Reb Aaron Mandl lived on the edge of nothing, as contentedly as if he were in the midst of plenty. He knew the holy books by heart and the wisdom of the ancients was upon his lips. That which kept him from being a Rabbi was that he stammered. Had he been born with a free tongue he would have exalted his position, for he

was in the direct succession of the men who spoke as God gave them utterance. He prayed that this infirmity might be removed: but no miracle happened, and he was content to be a doorkeeper in the House of the Lord, and the official slaughterer of the fowl and cattle.

As he always performed the last sad rites at the grave of the dead, the kindred of the departed frequently went to his house before the funeral, and many a crown was pressed into his hands that he might speak flattering, if not lying words; but the words he spoke were addressed to the spirit of the departed which was supposed to hover over the grave; they must be true and as just as the fallible judgment of man could make them.

He put the bag of sacred earth under the head of Moritz Redlich and placed in his hands the forked twigs as a symbolic aid in the resurrection; then he spoke to the dead as was his custom. His voice rose from the grave in a sharp staccato, like the rattle of a drum, interrupted by long stammering pauses.

“Moritz Redlich, may your head rest on the sacred soil of Palestine till the day of the Great Judgment; may the angel of God not miss your grave when he comes to raise the dead.

“You have been the staff and stay of Israel for a generation, unto you we gave heed, and your speech fell upon our ears like rain. You smiled upon us when we had no confidence, you pointed the way when we were bewildered; you delivered the poor when they cried, the fatherless also when they had none to help them.

“You were eyes to the blind and feet to the lame and a father to the needy. Your lips never uttered unrighteousness and you spoke no deceit. When God afflicted you, you never turned away from Him, and when we fenced you about with derision you did not break through in anger. Your kinsfolk have failed you, and those whom

you have loved have turned against you, and the hand of God has touched you." There was a pause, for the old man was weeping and stammering, then he continued his weird lamentation.

"May God the Almighty Ruler of the Universe bless thy friends, who through good report and evil report remained loyal to thee, cleaving closer to thee than those who are flesh of thy flesh and bone of thy bone, and may He have mercy upon us as we need mercy, for we have sinned against thee. We have sinned against thee, Moritz, our friend, we have sinned against thee as we have sinned against God and we turned from thee when thou didst need a helper." And he began smiting his breast and the sons bowed themselves to the ground and wept, and all the men took up the lamentation, beating their breasts and tearing their garments.

"May God have mercy on your wife, on your sons and your daughter and on us miserable sinners!" And they repeated it after him. "May God have mercy on us miserable sinners!"

"May the earth be light upon your broken body," and he stepped out of the grave and the earth began falling into it. There was a blessing in casting earth upon the dead and they all shared in it, including Father Kalman, who remained by the grave until they had gone.

When he walked home alone through the *Esplanade*, the swish of his *sutan* was accompanied by his sobs and in his hand he tenderly held the snuff tobacco box which he had kept for his friend, the box with the Greek goddess on the lid. He turned it between his thumb and finger as if undecided what to do. Then he slipped it into his pocket and took snuff from the one having the picture of Christ with the bleeding heart.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE: SANCTI EXITI

THE cornflowers had faded and the poppies stood stiff and dry with ripening pods. The little boys were breaking and shaking them and were munching the creamy seeds, not however before they had pronounced an incantation, for it is bad form to open a poppy seed pod without repeating this chant, whose meaning only the fairies know.

Poppy pod, poppy pod,  
Sleep and nod, sleep and nod,  
Shake you up, wake you up,  
Bite your head, break your cup.

The sheen of gold and silver had crept into the grain and the beets were growing undisturbed, drawing their sweetness from the sun and air; the cabbages sealed their heads more solidly against worms and pests and all other pernicious influences, intent upon being good cabbages. Indeed it promised to be an abundant harvest "*Chvala Bohu*"; but the workers unlike the cabbages were not content to be just peasants, and their heads were open to all sorts of strange notions. Stephan Hruby complained that they were not singing as they used to sing, and that it was due to sugar beets and emigration. After the Pan's death, which came soon after the tragic end of Moritz Redlich, Yanek's father had taken charge of the farm, and with it inherited the Pan's leather breeches and his pet aversions.

Assuming that Stephan Hruby was exaggerating after the manner of men who have great responsibilities thrust



upon them, something had come into the atmosphere of Hraszova which had robbed it of its buoyancy, and the very air seemed laden by a brooding fate. The cheerful peasants who asked so little of life, who walked as docily as the oxen beneath their yokes, and worked from sunrise to sunset, began to question whether all the daylight were for labor, and whether the small share of the harvest which they received was a just reward for their toil.

"Yes, it is those Americans," the young Baron said, "if we could only ship them back from where they came . . ." and he was thinking chiefly of Yanek Hruby. "Since that upstart came home," he was saying to Father Imre Baczko, with whom he was playing cards one evening at the Casino, "we haven't had a peaceful day in Hraszova.

"The workmen are spoiled for us, and as for the women! One can't have them and use them and then throw them aside any more, but some clout of a peasant lad picks them up baby and all and tries to call one to account." Yes, indeed, the good times for the spoilers were gone. The curate agreed with him perfectly and was reminded of an episode he would rather not recall. An American had come into the parsonage a few days before and told him that if he had him over in America he would put a bullet through him, "Holy Father or no Holy Father," and when the curate tried to silence him by offering him some banknotes, he threw them at him and swore a bloody curse right in his face.

The Reverend Imre Baczko wished that the Baron's talk had not revived unpleasant memories and so spoiled his perfectly good hand; he tried to concentrate upon the few cards left, pulling heavily upon his long Virginia cigar, but he was losing the game, for he could not keep his mind off the incident, especially as Father Kalman

was a witness of the disagreeable interview with the American. The worst of it was that the old man did not say anything to his curate—just walked up and down the room opening and shutting his snuff tobacco box and muttering and crossing himself.

“Yanek Hruby,” thought the curate, “he could leave to the Baron, but Father Kalman”—well he had taken the matter up with the Bishop. There was the last election when he used the church to let in the voters, and then tolling the church’s bell at a Jew’s funeral, and a suicide at that! Fortunately he stopped that sacrilege. Any way the old man was failing and ought to make room for a younger man.

“In the devil’s name,” cried the Baron, “are you playing cards or are you dreaming?”

“Neither,” answered Father Baczko curtly, as he threw down the cards and left the Casino.

It was not only the peasants who were changed or changing, singing less and thinking more; back of Vavra’s butcher shop there was a brooding silence and the puckery wine and the greasy *Petchenkas* could not bring back the good old times. Wenzel Motichka, the firebrand, after being in jail, had been sent back to Bohemia, to the joy of the gendarmes but to the regret of the small boys, for Wenzel made good candy.

The bootmakers and the *Hallinary* now carried their goods to the markets in vain, for the women wanted high heeled shoes with patent leather tips, and stylish clothes of soft, clinging stuffs; and the men were as bad as the women, so that one couldn’t tell a peasant from a tradesman by his clothes or by watching him eat and drink.

The customers at Vavra’s wine shop grew fewer and fewer. “What’s the good of staying in Hraszova,” they said as they were leaving for America, “when the Stephans and Pavels and the Martzins (meaning the

Toms, Dicks and Harrys of Slovakdom) come back from over there and walk about like lords, and have money enough to drink sweet, heavy wine at the inn and don't think Pan Vavra's wine shop good enough for them, and won't wear heavy cowhide boots, or white, stiff *Haliny* (which shed hair like a white mangy dog), but wear clothes as good as the Baron's?" It was growing so quiet back of Vavra's butcher shop that the gendarmes passed it by without looking or listening, now that Wenzel Motichka was gone and the Slovak spirit had been so crushed that no one dared sing "*Hey Slovane.*"

The Magyar officials walked about proudly, clicking their boot heels and twirling their waxed mustaches, sure of their overlordship and thanking God that at last the government was in strong hands, unyielding and efficient, that the nonsense about manhood suffrage had been knocked into smithereens and that emigration was going to be checked. Everything was as God intended it to be in the realm of St. Stephan except that the Slovaks still preferred to remain Slovaks and that in the army the German language was the language of command. So in the Parliament they debated day and night and hurled hot Magyar oaths and inkwells at each other and fought duels, to the end that the Slovaks should say "*Ala Szolgayo*" when they met each other instead of "*Yak se mash*" and that the soldiers should count their steps *Egy, Ketoe, Harom* instead of *eins, zwei, drei*.

The Judge also thought that everything was as it should be in the corner of *Magyar Orszag*, except his asthma and the gout, and the Americans who had gone away like sheep and had come back like rams. As for that pesky Yanek Hrubby . . . in Budapest they would find a way to deal with him, just wait! And his triple chin shook with satisfaction, like calf's foot jelly just turned out of the mold. Of course there was Father



Anton Kalman; well, he was an old man and one could leave him to the curate; that curate is no fool, even if he is a Holy Father. He has cut his eye teeth.

Father Kalman was sitting at breakfast on one of those late summer days. He had said early mass as an act of special devotion, for he needed to be assured of the Divine Presence; yet he must have been thinking wicked thoughts for he was saying to himself, "God forgive me!" and was mentally crossing himself. Indeed for Father Kalman things were not as they ought to have been. Hraszova was no more Hraszova, now that Moritz Redlich and the Pan were gone. "The curate, the curate!" That was the reason he was asking Divine pardon and crossing himself, while he was drinking his coffee and dipping the crusty roll into the cup.

"I can't look at that curate any longer," he was thinking, as Father Imre Baczko came in and sat opposite him. "He grows flabbier every day and he seems to ooze uncleanness. Oh, good Lord, judge me not as I am judging!" He stifled his thoughts of the curate and began thinking of loneliness since the death of his friends, and of Helena and how homesick she was and how impossible it was to have her with him even for a short visit, and lo, there it was again—the curate.

"The Lord be praised! Things are getting along nicely in Hraszova," Father Imre Baczko was saying to himself, and he felt no need to make the holy sign, while there was a look of triumph in his eyes. Two letters lay on the table, one at each place, and the assurance of deliverance came through them for they were formidable looking and the Episcopal seal was upon them.

After Father Kalman had carefully scraped the sugar from the bottom of his cup and had taken the first pinch of snuff for the day, both as deliberately as always, he carefully cut the envelope of his letter with the edge of



the large bread knife, and slowly unfolded the parchmentlike sheet. The curate tore open the one addressed to him and had read and reread his letter while Father Kalman still held his in his trembling hand.

Father Baczko was clearing his throat waiting for his vis-à-vis to say something, but he sat silent, a faraway look in his eyes; thinking that perhaps after all it was God's judgment for his unchristian thoughts about his curate. But what should he have thought? One cannot make an unclean vessel clean by thinking it so. No, it was not just what he was thinking about the curate, but what he had seen and heard. No, he had not trusted to scandal mongers.

"God forgive me, perhaps I was jealous—because they liked his preaching better. Yes, yes, an old man gets to be childish." And had he not been tempted, and how near he often was to yielding, and how often and how long he had been plagued by unclean thoughts, which held his will as in a vice. Yet he had overcome temptation.

But there was the apothecary's cook for whose downfall the curate was responsible. The women lifted their eyebrows when they met her. Then she had gone away to Trnava for a time and had come back looking as well as ever, only she was very pale. "Oh Lord, forgive me!" He said it audibly and crossed himself, and took an extra heavy dose of snuff and wiped his eyes to hide the tears of which the snuff alone was not the cause.

"You have bad news?" the curate asked, his malice finely concealed.

"Oh no, very good news, thank you, very good news," was the reply, and of course it was not a lie, for, after all, he would be rid of the curate.

"You have been transferred?" and the malice was evident.

"No, I have been elevated." Oh good Lord, that was not a lie, for the little parish of Boor to which the Bishop had transferred him was a thousand feet up in the mountains, on a cold and windswept plateau.

"A Bishopric—perhaps?" There was irony in the curate's voice.

"Better than that—for the martyrs shall be first," Father Kalman thought, "and may the Lord forgive the pride of it."

"The saints are always rewarded," sneered the curate.

"But not by their Bishops," retorted Father Kalman, and a swift glance of triumph escaped his eyes. Then he reproached himself; yet he knew that Father Baczko's promotion to his own place was not due to the younger man's saintliness.

"You should not have meddled in politics, Father Anton."

"I did not meddle on the right side, that is what you mean, is it not?"

"The government is always on the right side," the curate replied tartly.

"Have it your way, have it your way, Father Baczko. Pilate was right and Jesus was wrong, Festus was right and Paul was wrong, the martyrs were wrong and Rome was right. You are right, have it your way."

"That isn't a fair argument, Father Anton. Rome was heathen and Hungary is Christian, the country of St. Stephan and St. Elizabeth."

"The government of Hungary is Christian? Yes, theoretically. There are Bishops and Archbishops in the House of Lords, and the king is crowned by the priest and the cross surmounts the crown; but practically it is as heathen as Rome was. Ah well, let us not argue." And Father Kalman sighed deeply. "I may be all

wrong, I shall soon know better," and there was a far-away look in his eyes.

"I shall leave here next week. The Bishop says that in consideration of my health he is sending me up into the mountains; so I must go to the health resort of Boor as soon as I can. I shall not have much time to recuperate. It may interest you to know that the Bishop is not only solicitous about my health, but about my conduct also; he hopes that I will not openly associate with the Jews and Protestants. The Bishop was well informed was he not?"

"It was an open scandal the way you behaved," the curate replied half apologetically. "I did not have to tell the Bishop very much. Remember that you went to the funeral of Moritz Redlich, and that you ordered the bell tolled for him, a Jew, a suicide, a man who had cheated men and women out of their money."

The blood rose in the pale cheeks of Father Anton Kalman. "I must beg you not to speak of that Jew. You are not fit to mention his name." His voice grew husky. "If it is scandal to associate with Protestant and Jewish men you have certainly avoided scandals. Of course you play cards with the Baron but he is hardly a man, and what about the women? Oh well, may the saints intercede for me. Oh Virgin Mary, intercede for me!"

Father Baczko had risen angrily. "You don't mean to insinuate that I am not keeping my vows of chastity?" He had struck the table with the palm of his hand and his voice was pitched high.

"No, no, I insinuate nothing,—nothing—only I didn't know that it was a sin to love men of other faiths and blood. Moritz Redlich was so much like John the beloved disciple, he was no Judas. Don't besmirch his name, his good name," and he opened his breviary and sought

refuge from his perplexities in the calm of the Divine Presence.

"Yes, indeed, we know it is on account of Father Kalman's poor health that he is to be transferred to Boor," the faithful ones were saying and they shook their heads dubiously. "But who ever heard of Boor being a health resort? The old men have the rheumatism, the women have goiters, and the children are half-witted, and if you want to find your stolen pig, go up to Boor. A nice reward this, for a man's devotion to the church, and a fine health resort to send him to in his old age!"

Pan Finor wrote a protest to the Bishop and the more daring ones signed it. There was a polite reply to the effect that Bishops know better than laymen what is right and what is wrong. Moreover, no officials or landlords had signed the protest, and while Father Imre Baczko might have been guilty of some slight indiscretions, the Bishop would personally look after him.

"Patriotism covers a multitude of sins," said Dr. Makutchky when Pan Finor showed him the letter, and then he added, "It is a crime to send the old man to Boor and a greater crime to put Father Baczko in his place." Pan Finor put his finger on his lips, warning the doctor. "Walls have ears," he whispered. "Yes, walls have ears but men have no conscience!" And the doctor spoke a little louder than usual.

"They will get you yet, my fine doctor. It is a wonder they haven't sent you to Nyitra long ago," Pan Finor said smiling ironically.

"They can have me whenever they want me, but they don't want me yet; for governments are stupid. If I were Pan-Slav they would have put me in irons long ago, but as I am only Pan-Christian they don't think me dangerous. They are mistaken, aren't they?"



"Yes, they are mistaken. You, my dear doctor, and all the rest of the suspected ones are as harmless as flies, but, come to think of it, flies are not harmless. You are as harmless as sheep. I am the only real rebel, and the Salvesh, although they, thank God, don't know it."

The Bishop's orders were the Bishop's orders and Father Kalman was going to Boor. He was celebrating high mass, his last mass, and the voices of the singers quivered and the responses were only half audible, for when he unveiled the great mystery and uplifted the Host, his friends were reminded of another Gethsemane and another Calvary. Even his enemies did not escape the wave of emotion which filled the church, and Father Imre Baczko was seen to wipe his eyes.

Early on Monday morning before the reapers went to the fields and the mountains seemed so near that he could almost touch them, Father Kalman left Hraszova.

"Thank God the mountains are still blue and not red, white and green," he thought as he crossed the *Esplanade*, and in imagination he was again walking with his cronies and heard the swash of the Pan's leather breeches and the cough of Moritz Redlich. The birds were singing as they always sang, and again he thanked God that they had not changed their tunes to please the Magyars and confound the Slavs. Their world was still God's world.

He walked to the edge of the Jewish cemetery and stood for a moment at the grave of Moritz Redlich in its dishonored corner. He smiled sadly as he saw the overhanging branches of the plum tree weighted down by the ripening fruit, which soon would fall and cover the grave of his dear friend.

Then he went in to the next inclosure, and knelt beside the flower covered grave of the Pan. He noticed that violets had been planted there. They would be fragrant

next spring. He stood long before the grave of the Pan's wife, and he could smell violets as if it were already spring. They had gathered violets together he and she, and she had put them into his buttonhole; then there were no more violets but incense. When he visited the Pan after she was dead he looked at her picture, he never dared look at her, while she was living, for fear he would smell violets. It did not matter that he smelled them when he looked at her portrait after she was gone.

Turning abruptly away he went to the Catholic cemetery and made the stations of the cross on his knees, though the grass was wet from the heavy dew. Before the huge crucifix he prostrated himself and prayed fervently, and when he looked up he thought he saw an encouraging smile on the pained face of the Christ, as if He were saying: "Brother, do not fear, Boor is a high place and better than a Bishopric for such as you and I."

When Father Kalman had gone down the hill he thought he heard the Man on the cross say:

"Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you for my sake." And he doubted his ears. But as he passed the *Bashany-itza* the voice repeated: "Yes, that is what I said. Blessed are ye."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: THE HARVEST HOME

ONE of the reasons for the Pan's dislike of sugar beets was, that harvesting them was like "pulling rats out of their holes." He used to say to Moritz Redlich, "I grant you that somebody has to raise sugar beets, but can you imagine them woven into a harvest wreath?"

Moritz Redlich was not a poet, and he never danced when the harvesters carrying the *Vyenetz*, brought home the last load of grain. He objected to beets on more prosaic grounds, because beet tops instead of plums were used in making brandy; so he agreed with the Pan that a harvest wreath of sugar beets would not be a thing of beauty, yet he insisted that a sheaf of wheat was not half as beautiful as a basket full of blue plums. Therefore wheat versus plums was one subject of those debates now forever ended, or perhaps resumed in another world, unless, for the sake of eternal peace, debates are prohibited there.

Christina did not wish the harvest home or *Vyenetz* as the peasants called it, to be celebrated this year. She had always frowned upon it, having her doubts as to the dances, the drinking, the loving and fighting which followed, and now that the Pan was gone she thought it a good time to stop.

The harvesters however did not share her opinion. "What would the Pan up there in Heaven think about us if we did not celebrate a harvest like this? Only twice in the memory of our generation was there such a harvest.

And then if the *Mlada Panka* remembered," the foreman said, "the Pan gave us two barrels of wine, and Marisha baked cakes the whole week and there were not too many, and the Gypsies played till morning, and the Pan, God rest his soul, danced every turn and drank a little, just a little," the old peasant said with a twinkle in his eye, "until *Panyi Velcomoshna* had to have him carried to bed.

"Verily, *Mlada Panka* Christina, if there is no *Vyenetz* after such a harvest as this, the Pan will turn over in his grave. The Pan was a great man for festivals; he thought that wine was made for drinking and women for embracing, and with all that he was a God fearing man as everybody knows, now wasn't he, *Mlada Panka*?" he asked ingratiatingly.

The harvesters male and female agreed with their foreman, and Sonya agreed also, and, what was worse, the *Mlady Pan* Hruby, as they now called Yanek, was in perfect accord with them. Indeed the *Mlady Pan* had grown to be an important personage since the death of Pan Yan Szenitzky. Slowly and reluctantly he accepted the place made for him by Fate or Sonya, and the two seemed one, and it was his yeá and nay which governed things, and governed even his father, although Christina said that Sonya could wind both of them around her little finger, and the thought was very bitter.

It was no secret that Yanek and Sonya were going to be married, and how could it be a secret, for Sonya's love was not of the secret kind. It was a great joy to Stephan Hruby who had forgiven his son's fiasco as a preacher in the light of this event, but there were two women who were not very happy over the prospect. One of them was Yanek's mother who could not understand how God could make such a mistake, when she had been praying that it might be Christina. The other woman did



not know why she was unhappy about it, and would not have confessed the fact even to herself.

Yes, there was going to be a *Vyenetz* after all, and the memory of it was to linger for many years, not because it was merrier than those which preceded it, in fact it wasn't, for the times were out of joint, and the Pan was not there to lead the dancers and serve the first cup, and pinch the red cheeks of the young women, and feed cake to the youngsters till they nearly burst. There were other reasons which made this *Vyenetz* memorable.

They had worked hard the day before, and all the wheat was in but one load which was made up of the choicest grain, the most golden and the fattest bundles. The Sun rose as usual that day but the workers did not stir. They slept till the feather beds grew too warm for them, and after breakfast there was much primping, and lacing of the most picturesque *prutzliks*, the putting on of innumerable plaited skirts, the tying of gorgeous aprons and riotously colored neckerchiefs. The men lingered as long as the women, for to put on the tight blue Sunday breeches took time, ribbons had to be tied exactly alike on both legs, and the brass buttons had to shine, the embroidered shirt sleeves must hang in the right folds, the boots had to be polished and each jaunty little hat was decorated in grasses, flowers and feathers.

The tallest among the reapers was chosen as the bearer of the *Vyenetz*. The women plaited it after they had adorned themselves, and a king's crown was never as magnificent, nor a bishop's miter never so high, and neither of them as heavy. It was twice as high as Pavel Shimko's head, bigger than the big church bell, and it was made of wheat, rye and barley, the heads of the ripe grain overlapping in alternate rows. Autumn flowers of many hues and gaudy ribbons were plaited in, and fell

over the shoulders of the proud youth, his face almost hid by them.

Thus they went out to get the last load of grain and David with his warriors and the Levites did not go after the Ark with more unction, and if they were half as resplendent the Old Testament has failed to mention it. The huge cart had been driven into the creek and washed and scrubbed, the high wheels with their dusty spokes and glistening ribs were polished, and the iron parts rubbed free from rust. Then the peasants wound flowers and grain around the wagon, in and out among the spokes and all along the far stretching tongue. The horses, the best horses, were hitched to it, and they too knew it was the *Vyenetz*; for Martzin Stefechek and his assistant had curried them as they were curried but once a year. The harness had been greased and the metal disks had been burned, till each shone like a star, and the brasses tinkled against each other like bells.

So they marched to the fields, singing as they always sang, only when they passed the cemetery they grew suddenly silent, the song died upon their lips and they walked solemnly all the length of the iron railing of the Protestant cemetery, where the Pan slept underneath the acacia tree. When the last marcher had passed beyond its boundaries they began to sing again, and the lads told the lassies now that the Pan could not pinch their cheeks they must do it, for pretty cheeks must be pinched, and there was much laughter and bantering and jests which the *Mlada Panka* Christina would not have liked to hear, "for she is awfully religious."

When they came to the stubble field where the last load was waiting to be taken home, they ate their midday meal before their solemn task began. The red and yellow pots were emptied of their bean soup, bacon and sausage. The big chunks of rye bread were brought out and the younger

ones were warned not to eat too much, for the big feast would come at sundown and they must leave room, lots of room.

"They were never stingy at the Pan's house, and, *Chvala Bohu*, the *Mlada Panka* Sonya is bossing the job, and she gives with both hands. Not that the *Mlada Panka* Christina is stingy, no, she is a good friend to the poor. If you are in trouble you can always count on her, but not when you want to be gay.

"As for drink she would just as soon give you poison as *Palenka*. She is too awfully religious! It isn't good to be too religious, but *Mlada Panka* Sonya is just right," the young women were saying.

When they had eaten and the old men and women had taken a nap and the young women had gathered fresh flowers for their corselets and the young men had pinned some on their waistcoats and had done other things which Christina would not approve, causing the young women to rub their cheeks in feigned indignation, the ceremony of loading the grain began. The foreman laid the first bundle, and one by one they followed in proper rank, and when it was all loaded the towering cart looked as if each bundle were mitered to the other, and was as straight on all sides as if a level had guided the eye.

The crowned youth walked ahead, straight and stiff as a drum major, the young women followed, and on top of the horses sat the drivers, Martzin Stefechek and his underling, who did not sit quite straight enough or guide his horse right, and was in for a continuous scolding, for Martzin Stefechek was master of the horses now that Stephan Hruby had been promoted. The foreman sat on top of the load and acted as master of ceremonies.

At the edge of the town the band met them, a sorry enough musical aggregation, for the Gypsies, the real musicians, were between two fires since the Pan-Slav agi-



tation. If they played for the Slovaks the Magyars would boycott them and vice versa. However as the Magyars had much more money and spent it freely the Gypsies were loyal to them and the Slovaks had to recruit a band from among themselves. A clarionet, a trombone, a horn and a violin were the musical instruments, but there was not much music in them and fortunately not much was needed; just enough to dance by and to sing with and what the band lacked in sweetness and harmony the singers supplied; for it was ever so much easier to sing than to play, especially as the players had stiffened their fingers swinging the heavy scythe and had never before played together.

Sonya, Yanek and Stephan Hruby and his wife met the reapers at the entrance to the Pan's domain, and the foreman uncovered and made a long speech. He had a hard time beginning, although it was the same speech he had used every year, yet it was always addressed to the Pan and was full of reference to his nobility of character, his pet hobbies and his generosity. Now the foreman stumbled, addressing Sonya first and when the gender became inconvenient he addressed Yanek, and the women began to titter. When at last he finished and presented the *Vyenez* to the *Mlada Panka* Sonya, she asked Yanek to receive it, for it was much too heavy for her. There were many cheers and sly allusions as to what would happen next year, and then Yanek put the *Vyenez* upon his head and wore it awhile, after which he opened the dance with one of the young women as his partner.

Sonya shared in the festivities only as hostess, and Marisha reported to the other servants that there had been something like a quarrel between the two sisters, and that Sonya had insisted that Christina should do the honors, and the latter had refused, and had called her sister heartless, and Sonya had called her bigoted, and



they had not spoken to each other since, and the *Mlada Panka* Christina had gone about with swollen eyes, and was now on a visit at *Babushka's* house so that she would not have to hear the music and the singing.

Yes, indeed, it was a merry day, pretty nearly as gay as when the last rich harvest was gathered. The young men sang to the musicians who tried to catch the tune and play it to the dancers, and it was round upon round, and the wine was passed between the short pauses, and the health of *Mlada Panka* Sonya and Yanek Hruby was drunk so often and so many long years wished them, that they were assured of living to thrice the age of Methuselah.

The old men and women walked about solemnly and thought of the altered times, and sighed when they spoke of the Pan; but they too lost their solemnity when the wine had made a few rounds, and the whirling dancers came to a stop only when Marisha appeared with a huge wooden spoon in her hand, announcing that supper was ready.

None are such tyrants as those who serve, and Marisha used her huge spoon as a czar uses his scepter, and she paid many old scores by giving mostly skin and bones to those who were under her displeasure, while she amply rewarded those who were her favorites, and no one escaped her sharp tongue. After the supper the dancing began again and the servants from other houses came and many a burgher's son and court clerk joined the merry throng, upon which a rich harvest moon shone approvingly. Perhaps the moon himself was under the spell of the season, for he looked well fed and merry and there was a twinkle in his eye as if to say: "Just go to it, have as much fun as you can for the times are changing and who knows whether we will see another *Vyenez* celebrated in Hraszova?"

The moon was in a gracious mood and the young maidens said that he was to blame for the magic touch which permeated everything and none escaped it.

There was magic in the golden dust which rose from the barn floor which the dancers' feet relentlessly pounded, it was in the sharp, panting breath of men and maidens, and was enhanced by the candles which flickered in the lanterns, whose feeble light became one with the golden gleam. There was magic on the bridge which spanned the river, and it danced upon the wavelets raised by the current and the gentle wind. Yes, it was magic, magic as old as the garden of Eden, and the young people forsook the dancing floor and sought each other under the trees, here and there. By twos and twos they wandered about aimlessly, it seemed to the lookers on, but they sought a way, a golden way. Some of them found it, others lost it; some of them came back with their faces shining, and others with tears in their eyes.

Yanek and Sonya did not escape the magic of the moon, and they were drawn away by it, away from the dancers and on with the dreamers. Together they listened to the slow murmur of the river and breathed in the rich odors of ripening fruit, and the moon said to them, "the world is made for lovers" and they took the moon at his word. Close together they walked, across the orchard and along the river's bank and they heard the harvesters singing as they went home, the work of the year and the joy of the day ended.

Sonya's kisses were on Yanek's lips and forgetful of all else he yielded himself to the joy of the moment; then something whispered to him and tried to waken him to earth. "You are accepting a prize without labor and without striving," that something was saying, and strangely, the reproof came from across the sea. "It isn't just fair. What would your fellow students say and

your old teachers? What of your professions and what of your dreams of the Kingdom and your helping bring it to Earth?"

Instinctively Sonya divined his thought, and told him of the work which needed to be done, and how much more he could do, being the Pan and having direction of the men, and there was still their beloved Slovakland to be redeemed from the oppressors. She threw herself into his arms and said she was his Sonya, and how could she live without him? He kissed her again and again and tried to silence the voice within him, by saying to himself, "It is God's will."

Yet he knew it was not God's will, and he heard Christina asking him whether the bit hurt and whether his heart sang, and he felt the bit pulling at his mouth, and the song in his heart had in it a discordant strain; yet he was saying to himself, "it is God's will, it is God's will. He knew he loved Sonya as a man ought to love a woman, as no man ever loved a woman before; still he thought he had reached the goal too soon, and it was not the goal for which he had striven, or the one marked out for those runners who are running for their king.

They had turned by the Baron's house and were walking along the deserted street. The little *isbas* looked large under the moon, and the church steeple touched the stars; only the big smokestack of the deserted brewery cast a shadow over them in their walk to Paradise. They came to the Pan's house and Yanek pointed out the window where he had seen her hand opening the shutter the morning after his arrival from America, and he confessed to having thrown a kiss to her window the night he came home from Vavra's; and she told him how she had loved him from the first and how sweet was the kiss he had given her the morning after the terrible storm.

With his arm around her they passed through the gate



and toward the house to which he had come not two years before with a different dream and a different hope. Sonya was joyously prattling, planning for the days so soon ahead of them, the wonderful days! They still heard the reapers singing but their songs were faint and distant upon the still and golden night. Then suddenly their dream was shattered and the moon lost its magic. Sonya called out, "Who is there?" She had heard footsteps and she trembled, and Yanek drew her closer to him.

"Don't be frightened, *Mlada Panka*, it is only I," and a man stepped out from the shadow of the wall. "It is I, *Mlada Panka*, Ferencz, don't you know Ferencz, the Judge's clerk? I have news for you, bad news," he whispered, "no one must know that I have been here.

"No, I must not go into the house, I must tell you here. A warrant for the *Mlady Pan* Hruby came from Budapest this evening. I opened the mail. The Judge, thank God, has an attack of the asthma and was not in the office." He told them that the charge was treason and that he would advise an immediate flight to America. He could hold back the warrant for twenty-four hours, perhaps a little longer if the Judge's asthma should be a little worse than usual. "Treasonable activities," was the charge.

Sonya was as one paralyzed. She held Yanek in her arms and wanted to defy the Judge and the Department of Justice in Budapest, but she began to realize the hopelessness and the selfishness of her desire, and together they went to Yanek's home and wakened his parents. No candle was lighted and in the dark they packed his bag. The horses were harnessed by Stephan Hruby, and a little after midnight he and Yanek started. Sonya clung to him and she and his mother drove with them as far as the village of Szotina. The two women



walked home together under the fading moon and mother Elzabetha was comforting Sonya. "My daughter, you will go to him, but I shall stay here." Then the younger one threw herself upon the other's breast and they both wept, and the moon, the cheerful, happy, careless, magic harvest moon slipped away into the dark, while Yanek was leaving home—but no, Yanek was going home.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE: THE REVEREND JOHN HRUBY

“**W**HEN may I go to my desk, Annenka?” the Reverend John Hruby somewhat timidly asked his housekeeper, who ruled him with dust cloth and scrubbing brush and was never ready to relinquish them, once she had gained a foothold. She was down upon her knees, sprawling over the already spotless floor, and continued her vigorous exercise, unheeding his appeal.

“Do you think you will ever finish cleaning this house?” he asked impatiently. She rose slowly to her feet, carrying her implements of warfare with her, and opening the window, shook her dust cloth at the offending smokestacks, as she said in her most acid tone, “I will finish cleaning when the mills stop blowing soot and cinders into the house.” She closed the window with a bang and locked it with a vicious jerk. “I throw out a pint of dirt and the mill spits in a bushel.” If steel mills were sensitive, this particular one would have felt hurt the way Annenka glared at it when she made that remark. Annenka hated the mills more than she hated the devil, which is saying a great deal, for she was a very pious woman and in her church they had never ceased to believe in his Satanic Majesty.

Availing himself of the opportunity afforded by Annenka’s shaking the dust cloth at the open window, the Reverend John Hruby took possession of his desk, planted his feet firmly on the floor and began writing his sermon. The ruler of his little universe was about to leave the study, when he sent after her a parting shot.

"What will you do when you get to Heaven, Annenka?"

"I will find plenty to do," she replied, viewing the floor with her bird like eyes, which magnified every speck of dust to the size of a mountain, "if you should get there first, for you are a very untidy person. Just look at the dirt you brought in on your shoes!" She fell upon her knees again and began scrubbing around his chair, and if he had not delivered his ultimatum in no uncertain tone, she would have lifted his feet and scrubbed under them.

Annenka having found her "second wind" as it were, the minister knew that it was hopeless to try to dissuade her from stopping, short of complete victory. Anyway, writing sermons was very difficult when he was completely wrapped up in things which concerned himself; so holding the position he had gained at his desk, he engaged her in conversation.

In spite of the diminutive to her name there was nothing delicate or dainty about her person, and she was neither young nor pretty. She had been called a "lemon" by one of the most Americanized of John Hruby's congregation, who had come to consult with him about performing a marriage ceremony. He had not cleaned his boots to her satisfaction (no one could) and she had unmercifully scolded him. He retorted by calling her a "lemon," and never before was American slang more justified, for the one word contained all that could be said about Annenka.

Of course, lemons have their virtues, and she was not without them, indeed the Reverend John Hruby did not know how he could get along without her, yet he was beginning to wonder how he could get along *with* her, for the parsonage was being fitted up for Mrs. Hruby, and that was the reason he engaged Annenka in conversation instead of writing his sermon.

"Annenka, the paper hangers are coming this afternoon."

"*Boshe Muy!*" she cried in dismay, "what a waste! The paper is just as nice and clean as it can be, and the men will drag in all the dirt in town, and they will spatter paste over everything, and I am just done housecleaning! *Boshe Muy!* Your Reverence, you have no mercy on an old woman!"

"Annenka," he replied jestingly, "you know you are never done housecleaning and you don't think I will bring my bride into the front room with that hideous paper on the wall."

A sad look crept over her hard and inexpressive face, and she glanced at the photograph standing on his desk. He was looking at it too, only he seemed to be wrapped up in it and his lips were shaped for speech, as if he were bidding his love welcome to the parsonage.

"What kind of paper have you chosen?" Annenka broke in sharply upon his dreams.

"Oh now, Annenka, you wouldn't expect me to pick out the paper without you," he replied diplomatically. "The men are coming this afternoon to pull off the old paper, then I want them to paint the ceiling. You and I are going this afternoon to select the paper."

"I don't know that it is any concern of mine what paper you put on the wall," she said. "But I think, lots of tulips would suit me best, great, big, red tulips, such as grow in Slovakland, or roses climbing all over on trellises." Her voice grew soft and as sweet as it was capable of being. "Those little red roses such as covered the walls of our *isba*."

"We will see about the paper, Annenka, and you know we have to buy furniture. What do you think she will like?" She knew exactly what the *Panyi Velcomoshna* would like, but she did not know whether His Reverence



could afford it. She wanted golden oak furniture, covered with plush, and a little marble topped table and a big sofa, and a bed of shining brass.

"And, Your Reverence, you must have feather beds; I know she will want feather beds and big bolsters. These hard American mattresses are no good."

There were ever so many things which were no good in America, according to Annenka, and when she began telling of the shortcomings of the country in which she was living, she continued indefinitely. The air was no good, the water was no good, and the American children—and the bread and the meat were in the same class. John Hruby had ceased to argue with her, for like all Slovak women, she had seen only the darker side of American life.

She had come over with her husband from the little village of Szotina, near Hraszova, to Coalton. They exchanged their *isba* and ten acres of land for a frame shanty and a miner's "patch." To go from the peace of the land to the strife, the struggle and the hubbub of American industrial life was indeed new and strange, and though the newness wore off soon, the strangeness remained. Beyond their "patch" was another one just as drear and colorless, and that was inhabited by Italians. Annenka knew all about them, for her father had gone to war in Italy, and he said: "You can't trust the Italians; they will stick you with a dagger every chance they get," and from that time on when she saw an Italian she saw an enemy who wanted to stab her with a knife.

Beyond the Italians there was another "patch," and another, and another, and all sorts of people lived in them, of whom she had never heard. She knew of Italians and Germans, Poles and Russians, but there were Greeks, Welsh and the Irish, who were the strongest and the most terrible.

"Dear me," she used to say, "how can our good Lord make so many strange and bad people?"

Beyond the "patch" was Main Street with its stores and saloons, and these too she learned to know; but beyond the stores were churches of strange faiths, and fine streets with houses set in gardens, each one of them as fine as the Pan's house in Hraszova and perhaps finer, and there were schoolhouses which were grander than the churches. The people who lived in the houses and worshiped in those churches and whose children went to the schools were all strangers, greater strangers than the Italians and the Greeks and the rest. Those people worked in the mine and the big mill, and while they ate macaroni and outlandish looking stews and had queer loaves of bread, they were working people, her own kind, and there was a certain bond of fellowship between them.

But these other people, the Americans—they were the master class, they were somewhat like the Magyars who ruled them over in Slovakland, only the Americans were much farther removed. She had quarreled with the Magyars and had called them bad names but she liked some of them. Though she did not hate Americans as she did the Magyars she did not like them, for she did not know them and thought them unknowable.

Her husband worked in the mine. "He was a very good husband," she had told John Hruby. "He never beat me, not even when he was drunk, but here in America it was different. After pay day he was like a crazy man. It was in the drink, it just made the men crazy. He was arrested a good many times and it took a lot of money to get him out.

"Yes, these Americans were very strict with the Slovaks; there were drunken Irish and Welsh and Germans but they were allowed to stagger home. The Slovaks have no vote and they seem so good naturedly

stupid, and they could be scared to death and they paid their fines, and never asked 'is it just and right'?

"Then there was a strike and my man sat around the house for weeks and the little we had saved had to be taken out of the bank. I was scared to death when he left the house for he was swallowed up by a crowd, and I heard pistol shots, and brickbats were flying, and then they brought him home with a hole in his head, and he laid there like dead and I was all alone with him, for every one was afraid, and then he died."

She had been alone with him in the shanty three days and no one had come near her. No wonder her cheeks had grown thin, with the color gone out of them, and her spirits drooped, and her tongue grew sharp, and they called her a "lemon."

When the Reverend John Hruby had asked her shortly after she had taken charge of him how she liked America, he was shocked to hear her say that she hated it. "All the women hate it," she said. Yes, he was shocked, for from the moment he had come back to America he felt that it was his home, for Sonya as well as himself, and everything he saw and heard and tasted he asked himself, "Will Sonya like it?" and he always answered his question in the affirmative. He realized as he had not before his return to Slovakland that he belonged body and soul to America, and he awaited with great impatience the time, now not far distant, when he could become a citizen, in fact, as he was already in spirit.

Naturally Coalton had changed since Annenka came to it some ten years before. From a small mid-western town it had grown so large that the mine shafts were crowded by the smokestacks of the mill, Main Street stretched farther out into the country, the big stores absorbed the little stores and encroached upon the residence section. The lines between the different "patches" were obliterated



and as a final proof of its progress the town of Coalton moved westward, until it embraced the little village of Milburn, the highly respectable village of Milburn, clustering around its college and living with it and on it and for it. Every year it turned out a goodly number of A.B.-s and latterly a few more B.S.-s and several D.D.-s. The D.D.-s encouraged fervent prayers for the "beloved institution of learning" and they were the kind of prayers that were frequently answered in a very substantial way.

The town of Milburn did not like to see itself become a part of the soot and dirt of Coalton. The great elm trees resented it and began dying from the top, and the retired farmers and returned missionaries and superannuated ministers resented it, but Coalton was growing and cared nothing for elm trees. It despised retired farmers and had little use for returned missionaries and superannuated preachers, but strange to say it liked the college and helped so generously with the endowment fund that a new gymnasium was built and also a stadium, and there were Roman holidays for the busy men of Coalton who "boosted" everything from coal and tin to football, and incidentally or accidentally the college.

John Hruby was forced to admit that Coalton was bleak and dirty and vulgar in spots, but it was a part of America, his America, and he accepted it as it had accepted him, without asking many questions.

He had been in Coalton over two years as pastor of a Slovak church which existed by the grace of the Mission Board. A tiny church, too plain to be called ugly, and too small to be offensive. It was wedged in between a towering Roman Catholic church which was really ugly, and a smaller Lutheran church which was a great deal uglier; fronting it was the big tin mill, with its twenty or more smokestacks blowing black smoke and white poisonous fumes into the face of all the churches.



He found a timid flock of some fifty souls, who either did not like the Lutheran minister, who was too autocratic for them, or who were God seekers by birth or the new birth, spiritual kinsmen of the despised "Salvesh"; Puritans in conduct and Christian in more than name. When the new minister came to them and preached a sermon which lasted only thirty minutes, the schedule time of sermons in America, they told him it was a nice little talk, but that a sermon is not a sermon unless it lasts an hour and a half. The midweek prayer meeting lasted two hours and then there was not time for all who wished to pray and testify to the goodness of God.

Among his parishioners was Annenka, who after her husband's death became his housekeeper, and she had scrubbed and dusted the little parsonage ever since. When she was not scrubbing or dusting she was in her spotless kitchen, where she "lived and moved and had her being." She tolerated the minister in his study, he entered the parlor by her grace but the kitchen was as unapproachable as Mount Sinai.

He was sure that Sonya would like Coalton, for he liked it. The merchants were kind to him and called him "Reverend Rooby," and the American Protestant ministers had invited him to their ministers' meeting, where every Monday morning they were very human and naïvely self-revealing, where they were vain and envious and humble and brotherly, where they tried to save the world by passing resolutions, and endeavored to stem the tide which had swept by them twenty-five years before. They had their doubts as to John Hruby's Evangelicalism because when a brother read a paper on the "Menace of the Roman Catholic Church," and made the usual references to guns stacked in parochial schools and the danger of the confessional, he criticized the paper severely and

plead for tolerance and truth, which made the reverend gentleman who had read the paper very angry.

On the whole, however, he was greatly liked, for although he was a foreigner he was so thoroughly an American, and it flattered them to think that here in America a man who had once mined coal could rise to be a minister. When they talked to their congregations of their duty to evangelize and Americanize the foreigner, they used him as an illustrious example.

His real friends however were outside the clerical profession. One of the professors in the college at Milburn had taken a fancy to him, and though Professor Carl Niederstadt was born in Germany and John Hruby was a Slovak, the old national feud between Teutons and Slavs counted for nothing in this "melting pot" of the nations, where, according to Professor Niederstadt, a super-nation was being shaped out of the broken fragments of humanity. He taught German and French, Latin and Greek, and he could have taught Italian and Spanish, had those languages been in vogue.

At a pinch he could have lectured on philosophy, history and English literature, but his specialty was the devil, whose pedigree he had traced and whose activities he had tabulated from the time he fell from Heaven, till he appeared so seductively in German literature, where he grew into the repellent tailed, cloven hoofed and sulphurous Satan of the modern world, which has almost ruled him out of the pulpit and completely left him out of science; yet who is so desperately and wickedly alive.

Professor Niederstadt knew all the poetry about the devil by heart and there were folios of it! While humorous and serious stories on his favorite theme bubbled out of him spontaneously, the seeming levity with which he talked about Satan brought him in conflict with the church authorities under whose auspices the college

operated, for without a real devil there could be no sin, and without sin there could be no atonement. However, he was a brilliant teacher and beloved by the alumni, in fact everybody liked him and the devil himself must have kept a cool spot in his burning Hell for his rotund and not too saintly biographer.

Professor Niederstadt had married a woman of New England parentage, training and conscience. She belonged to that brilliant group of American women who, freed from household drudgery by the army of immigrant servants, had thrown her energy into acquiring an education. She was one of the first graduates of an eastern college for women, which boasted of being the female Harvard; she had traveled abroad and while reading Hyperion under the shadow of the walls of Heidelberg University had fallen in love with her teacher who had already lost his heart to his pupil, and thus she returned to her New England relatives with this German husband.

She was as practical as he was idealistic and that alone kept them out of the poor house, for Professor Niederstadt knew about as much of the value of money as a two year old baby. He was too methodical to be a brilliant writer, and not having the energy or desire to push his interests, the result was that he remained in Milburn college while his students, knowing infinitely less than he, were called to university positions where they made quite a stir in their somewhat limited world.

John Hruby knew that Sonya would like the Niederstadts because—and he had no other reason than because he did.

One other man very close to him was a newspaper man, a little younger than he, who could write brilliantly about anything from the description of a boxing match in the Opera House to a report of the erratic and popular



Methodist minister's sermon; he could fill the funny page with side splitting jokes or turn a sonnet faintly reminiscent of Shelley.

He was baptized Wayne and did not know why, except that Wayne rhymed with MacBlane, which was his family name, indicating that he had inherited from his sensitive mother the poetic temperament, as well as a frail constitution, for which he had little regard, sitting up till the early hours of the morning pounding his typewriter and filling yellow copy sheets.

He drank black coffee and stronger things almost any time and all the time, and he smoked incessantly, in which latter habit he was encouraged by Professor Niederstadt and the Reverend John Hruby, who himself, smoked, causing much shaking of heads among the officers of his church to whom smoking was a cardinal sin.

The two and a half years since he left Hraszova seemed ten times as long. Many letters went back and forth, and the postman of Hraszova shook his head at the heavy letters he had to carry to the *Mlada Panka* Sonya up in the Pan's house.

Of course she was coming, she wrote John Hruby, but one thing and another detained her and she did not know when she could get away. The farm had to be looked after and laborers were growing scarce; *Babushka* was taken ill and had no one to take care of her, so she had to be moved to the Pan's house, and Christina was nursing her. There were sly allusions to other suitors, which occasioned frightful pangs of jealousy on this side the ocean, which Sonya evidently enjoyed; at last a letter saying that she was coming. She would have come sooner or later, probably later; but a pistol shot fired in Serajevo, changed the current of history, and many things happened sooner, which need not have happened



at all. The war cloud which had hung so long over the Balkans broke, and the storm swept on.

The Seventieth Regiment of Infantry, Sonya wrote, went to Serbia, and only the cripples came back: There was another draft and another, and all Europe was being slowly drawn into the vortex. With the future so uncertain, she was ready to come at once, and that was why the Reverend John Hruby and Annenka, were going that afternoon to choose the wall paper for Sonya's room.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX: PRONOUNCING PRZEMYSL

**I**F John Hruby could have scoured the streets of New York City with soap and water that May morning before Sonya stepped upon them, and clothed every ragamuffin in splendor; if he could have gilded the elevated and subdued the subways, and arched the skyline with a burnished halo; if he could have made the customs inspectors more gentle; above all, if he could have hastened the process of docking the ship which brought Sonya, he would have done so.

To do one of these things was as impossible as to do all of them, and none of them was necessary; for Sonya looked at everything in a dazed delight, which she expressed fluently in adjectives of three languages, and very timidly and haltingly in a fourth; for she had studied English to surprise her lover who gave her small chance to speak in any language, much to the amusement of her fellow passengers whose friends and lovers were not so demonstrative.

Ardent as he was in receiving her he was no less so in introducing his beloved country, and only the saints who meet earth's pilgrims in Heaven and show it off, know what a pleasure it was and what a joyous task. He had an excuse for every jolt, for every marring incident, even for the garbage cans which lined the curbing in front of the crowded, drab tenements on the East Side. There, in a Settlement in which one of his classmates was scattering grains of salt to "leaven the lump," they were to taste American hospitality, and there the bliss of being wedded awaited them.

In the tangle of human beings, seeming an inextricable

mass without beginning or end, John Hruby pointed out to Sonya, purpose and plan; and in the roar of the two elevated railroads which flanked the Settlement, in the rattle of carts, the thunder of trucks and the shrill voices of children he heard rhythm and melody; for only greed and hate are blind and deaf; love never is.

So, standing at the window of the room where their plighted troth had brought them, they looked above the tenements which sheltered the broken fragments of races and nations blown together by the storms which swept the Old World, and saw a great rainbow. Though it was cast in steel they saw it in all the prismatic colors, and though it groaned beneath the strain of traffic, they heard through it the promise of God against another world drenching flood.

Tier upon tier of houses faced them, one rising above the other, then a vast curve of the elevated, around which the wheels ground and the cars screeched, and beyond, three giant peaks, wonderful towers, bathed in the purple of the setting Sun, as if guarding the wealth treasured beneath them and behind them. With full hearts they prayed, saying: "God is Good," and not "Gold is God"; for they were lovers, not traders and hoarders.

The children were in a wild tumult—upon the street below, skipping the rope or sprawling upon the asphalt, dancing in merry tattered groups and singing,—their shrill voices penetrating and almost drowning the noise of the busy city.

A company of soldiers marched past, with a flag at the head of the company. "The Star Spangled Banner!" John Hruby said and he stood erect saluting it, the flag of their new country. A surging crowd followed and then a different flag appeared, and as Sonya recognized it, her face clouded; for it was the flag of Italy and then the voices of the newsboys told the story: "Italy

enters the war! Extry! Extry!" and they waved their papers in the faces of the throng, and there were more flags, and more and more marching men, the reservists of Italy answering the call of their country, and the sunset grew redder and redder and deepened into blood. Love was not strong enough to keep back Sonya's tears, for she had seen the marching men go out with banners and *Huzzahs* and *Elyens*, and she had been one of the throng bidding them good-by, her face flushed by the contagious enthusiasm.

"It will be a short war," they said, "we must teach those Serbian murderers a lesson." Later she saw them coming back in sorry straggling groups, lame and halt and blind. Then more men marched away and still they shouted and women strewed flowers on their way, and this time they marched toward the east, for the Russians were coming.

"We must save the Fatherland!" The leaders shouted, and though there was no Fatherland to save, and though the men they were to fight were of their own blood and speech, they went out and did as they were bid, and none of them came back for they were trampled down by the Russians, swallowed by an encircling army, carried into a long captivity, and then an awful black silence.

More and more men went and there was news of victory, and flags were waved again, and *Elyens* were shouted on the streets, and again more men marched out and were eaten up by the great monster.

John Hruby spoke soothing words, trying to calm his wife. He kissed away the tears from her cheeks and silenced her accusations against herself for leaving them over there in their great misery; and he comforted her until the room grew golden again, although the sunlight had long ago faded and they had shut out the white glare of the street lights.



The young husband's love could not make Coalton look like Hraszova, though it made every effort to look like New York, with its abridged White Way, and the two electric signs which nightly performed their antics; and the movies only a month or two behind Broadway, and the styles about a season's distance from Fifth Avenue. No, Coalton was not like Hraszova—but infinitely better with its electric lights and telephones, its waterworks and paved streets; yet with its face hard set against the stranger, in spite of the sign on the automobile highway: "Welcome to greater Coalton. Coalton grows, and Milburn knows." That was the prize slogan of Greater Coalton after it had annexed Milburn and its college. That slogan cost the Commercial Club one hundred dollars and it was worth the money. Of course you were welcome to Coalton, to work in its mills and mines and to patronize its merchants, but Greater Coalton did not care much how you lived as long as you worked and traded there.

Like most American towns Coalton's most unsavory quarters were near the railroad station; so its back yards and alleys stared at Sonya in their slovenly, unwelcoming way, and when the hack driver, upon hearing the address of his passengers, removed his cigar from his mouth and spat upon the ground, not too careful of aim and distance, she shrank visibly. The heat and dust on the way, the dense pall of smoke from the mills nearly choked her. When the hack stopped before the diminutive parsonage in the unkempt street, her heart sank, and when the door was opened by grim faced Annenka who did not kiss her hand—and looked so stern and hard, her eyes filled, and John Hruby knew that Sonya and her new environment were not well matched, and a great doubt rose in his mind. No, it was not like Hraszova, and Sonya tried bravely to conceal her disappointment

which changed to chagrin when she saw the highly polished yellow oak furniture and staring wall paper.

When her trunks came she regained her accustomed gayety, for she had brought many old Slovak embroideries and curtains, and although Annenka loudly protested, she removed the purple plush portières from the doorways and covered everything that was drapable with the bright and beautiful coarse linens softened to ivory yellow by age. Under her direction John put up shelves and screwed in hooks and soon pretty earthen ware jugs and plates adorned the walls. Sonya very diplomatically appealed to Annenka for advice as to the disposition of certain objects; so although that cheerful person acted as if every nail were driven into her bosom, she said with a contented sigh, when all was arranged to Sonya's satisfaction: "It is like in the old country; but we do not have enough feather beds and bolsters." When Sonya's numerous feather beds and bolsters at last arrived and towered one above the other till the brass bed was not visible, the gulf between the two women was almost bridged.

The *Panyi Fararka* which was Sonya's official title as the wife of the *Pan Farar*, fitted into the little church as poorly as she fitted into Coalton. The unregenerate women of the congregation, those who belonged to the church because they did not like the Lutheran pastor, said that she was "stuck-up." They met her at the Sewing Society a few days after her arrival. They were lavishly and loudly dressed, and in her hearing, Mrs. Szobka said to Mrs. Chlopka "In America it does not matter whether you are a Pan's daughter or a peasant's; it's the clothes you wear," and they looked somewhat disdainfully at Sonya's dress which was so simple, and told her she must "hurry up and not look so much like a greenhorn."

The saints of the congregation were not so severe; although they believed that she was still unregenerate and made her the subject of long and urgent petitions, both public and private. There were a hundred more people than usual in church the Sunday after the bride's arrival. The service was less like Hraszova than any of the many strange things she had encountered. The little reed organ and the choir, a very ill assorted group, facing the congregation; the simple desk and the three orthodox, plush covered chairs upon one of which sat her Yanek in his black coat and *no* Geneva gown. It all looked so crude, from the strip of green carpet across the platform, to the minister's shoes which he had shined himself that morning and which seemed so obtrusive without the soft folds of a Geneva gown above them. She noticed too for the first time that the hair was thinning on his temples.

The benches creaked every time a new worshiper entered and sat down, and the entire congregation looked around to see who it was; the choir sang an American desiccated anthem done in Slovak, and the congregational singing was of the militant Gospel Hymn variety.

"God has strange and varied tastes," thought Sonya as she recalled the church in Hraszova, the massive pulpit and altar, the solemn Psalm tunes, the reverberating tones of the new organ and the begowned minister folding his hands over his ample stomach. A disquieting thought began to haunt her from which she never quite freed herself—that Christina would have fitted herself into this environment much better than she ever could. Strange to say, John Hruby had the same thought as he looked from the pulpit at her, sitting there so stiffly, and apart from the congregation, like an orchid among sun flowers.

On Thursday evening she attended prayer meeting in



the small room which served many purposes and which was crowded to suffocation by men and women from the mines and mills. She resented their familiarity with the Almighty less than the prayer which Annenka offered in her behalf; for it included a fervent petition to make her meek and humble, and in her heart Sonya dared the Heavenly Power to answer that insolent prayer. Needless to say she did not attend the next meeting or the next, and she remained unregenerate, and a little more aloof and sinfully proud.

As little as she belonged to her husband's flock so little did she belong to the town of Coalton. Professor and Mrs. Niederstadt called with Mr. MacBlane, but no other Americans found their way to the parsonage; and while Mrs. Niederstadt was kind and came as often as possible, for most of the time Sonya was left alone with Annenka and her small daily tasks and her homesickness which increased daily; for suddenly all news from Hungary ceased coming and Hraszova was as if swallowed up by an earthquake. She clung the more to her husband, and the evenings when no church work took him from home were happy times for both of them.

As the winter advanced there was good reason for Sonya's non-attendance upon the church services, and John Hruby looked worried, and though his prayers were ardent, his sermons were short and without spirit. The women were telling one another that the *Panyi Fararka* had expectations, and in the spring, baby Christina was born.

Sonya was very ill, and only a slender thread held her to life. A mist hung over her spirit, and when she saw the baby she did not fondle it, but held it far away from her and called it Christina and said it looked like Christina and was Christina's baby.

Its father wished to call it Sonya, but she insisted



that it must be named Christina, and she had her way. Annenka, who loved babies but to whom motherhood had been denied, cared for the baby and loved it, and began spoiling it by rarely leaving it out of her arms when she could take time from her other duties.

Gradually the cloud lifted from Sonya's mind but the old buoyancy never returned and the baby was still half strange to her.

Another spring came and the twenty-third of May, their second anniversary, and another summer and winter, and still Coalton did not know, and would not have cared had it known, that there was an alien woman in the "patch" suffering from lack of the companionship of gentle women and the refined surroundings to which she was accustomed, and also from the horrors of war which were more real to her than to any one else in Coalton.

She had read in the papers of invading armies, of new victories, and new defeats on this front and that front, of atrocities and of starving communities. Her bread was heavy before Mr. Hoover ordered it mixed with corn meal, and her coffee was bitter before sugar was rationed.

However, Coalton gradually became conscious of its alien population. America had declared war upon Germany. The European disease crept across the Atlantic and the war fever rose higher and higher. Coalton became conscious of belonging to a nation at war. Coalton became conscious of herself in a larger and nobler way.

The spring of 1917 brought a new color to the landscape, a color which at first turned the hearts of men and women sick, and yet as it deepened and grew more pronounced, it became the color of a new pulsing joy; the nation was thinking and feeling in khaki. Uncle Sam speeded the mines and mills, thrice as much smoke

came belching out of the smokestacks, and there was neither day nor night, neither Sabbath nor feast day for the workers. Thrice as much coal needed to be dug from the mines, for the mills, the ships and the homes. The national arm had to be strengthened, the national will needed to prevail.

"Patriotism and not profit," was the new slogan in Coalton. It was the new slogan for America, the America derided as the land of the dollar chasers; and the alien workers dug as they had never dug before and stirred the fires and kept them burning day and night. The nation needed men and money, and the aliens, the "Hunkies" and the "Guinies" and the "Roundheads" were appealed to in the name of a common country and a common cause. So it came to pass that Coalton discovered its alien population and discovered the little church and its pastor, and the ladies of Coalton discovered Sonya, and this is the way it happened.

It was the time of the second Liberty Loan Drive. Like the men, the ladies of Coalton had responded to their country's call. They sacrificed their meaningless leisure, and began to knit, and there were meetings and organizations, and divisions and sub-divisions, and each of the society leaders was given a foreign district wherein to obtain subscriptions.

Mrs. Springer, the banker's wife, was the chairman of the Southwest Division which included the Slovak "patch." Mrs. Springer and her aids knew of the "patch," they had seen it from a distance, they had heard of drinking and fighting and strange wedding customs there, but none of the ladies of Coalton had seen it at close range. Now they were going from house to house, and finding out that women are, after all, women, and that in spite of the smoke and soot the struggle for cleanliness was heroic and unremittent in the "patch,"

and that in the wretched houses for which their husbands were responsible and from which they drew revenue, there were wonderful little nests built by home loving mothers; and that in spite of health defying congestion, there were ruddy children and young women who maintained their virtue, and boys who were growing into good, if not great men. Without their knowing it or wanting it or caring, America had crept into the "patch," and there the nation's call found ready response.

It was Mrs. Springer herself who came to the parsonage door which was opened by Annenka who showed her into the parlor, where Sonya greeted her in very correct English, but with a decided accent.

Mrs. Springer stated her errand, and while she was talking about the Liberty Loan her mind was very busy with something else. "How sweet and clean this little house is," she was saying to herself while she was mechanically telling the needs of the government. "And what wonderful embroideries these are and what cunning, odd looking pitchers and plates!"

While she was telling what a safe investment the Liberty Bonds were she was thinking: "What a refined looking woman she is, and what cute English she speaks, and how does it happen that the women of Coalton have never heard of this perfect dear of a woman?"

There came a very savory odor from the kitchen and Mrs. Springer rose to go saying: "it must be nearly noon." Sonya invited her to break bread with them, and called her husband from his study and they sat down to a delicious luncheon of *Paprika Chicken* and *Noodles* and fragrant coffee. Then Annenka brought in baby Christina, and Mrs. Springer raved over her daintily embroidered garments; and, when Sonya subscribed for an incredibly large number of Bonds, Mrs. Springer embraced and kissed her.

Suddenly she remembered that it was her turn to lead in the current events discussion, at the next meeting of the Literary Club, and she asked Mrs. Hraby whether she knew something of the Czecho-Slovaks (which she pronounced abominably), and when Sonya told her she was one herself, light began to dawn upon the darkened mind of Mrs. Springer, and she realized that Czecho-Slovaks are really human beings, and not merely legs and arms for digging coal and melting ore and working in kitchens.

She was still talking about this thing and that thing but she was thinking how the ladies of the Literary Club of Coalton would open their eyes when she told them so many things about Czecho-Slovaks which were not found in newspapers and magazines.

"Mrs. Rooby," she said, "I have had a lovely time, and won't you come to our Red Cross meeting? And by the way, Mrs. Rooby," and her hand was on the door knob, "perhaps you can tell me how to pronounce *Przemysl*." And Mrs. Springer went away as if she had been lifted into the seventh Heaven; for she had been told how to pronounce *Przemysl*.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: STEVE BURLY

THE ladies of Coalton and the women from its frayed edges and "patches" had discovered each other. The ladies of Coalton reluctantly acknowledged that much fine womanhood was concealed by shawls and unfashionably wide skirts, and the women of the "patches" were saying "who would have thought that these 'Americansky' ladies could be so human." Yet when Mrs. Springer declared at one of the Red Cross meetings that they were all "sisters," speaking in an emotional tremolo which brought tears to the eyes of the ladies of the Red Cross Society, she had in mind a sisterhood with limited liabilities.

Mrs. Hruby was taken, *in toto*. "Dear Mrs. Rooby" who could pronounce all those foreign names perfectly, and gave them receipts for new and savory dishes, and knew so many fancy stitches, and was a Czecho-Slovak! "Imagine having a real Czecho-Slovak lady in Coalton! Those wonderful Czecho-Slovaks who are fighting over there in Russia to make the world a decent place to live in," quoth the ladies of Coalton's "four hundred." It was a little different to be sure with Mrs. Trnka and Mrs. Blinka; they were sisters in a very limited sense indeed.

Long before the war Mrs. Trnka had given up a son and Mrs. Blinka her husband in one of those underground trenches whose heroic happenings never reach the top crust of the world, which they helped make a comfortable if not a "decent place to live in." The foreman of the mine knew about it; there was an explosion in one of the mine chambers, endangering the lives of

sixty men, and he asked for volunteers to rescue them, and John Trnka and Martin Blinka did not count their lives of value, and did not hesitate long because there were a Mrs. Trnka and a Mrs. Blinka, and little Trnkas and Blinkas. They descended into the jaws of death and never ascended to earth. The good people of Coalton, reading the list of those killed, thanked God that there were no Americans among the dead.

Mrs. Trnka and Mrs. Blinka wept, and said it was God's will, and took in boarders, and washed and scrubbed and brought up their little ones, and when the war broke out and the government took the men, their sons went without a murmur; for the Trnkas and the Blinkas were used to bearing children in pain, and rearing them in poverty, and then giving them to kings and masters, and they never received the recompense of a patriotic halo, crowning their sorrowful faces.

Sonya herself had not realized what wonderful women these were until, at a Red Cross meeting, she saw how the American ladies edged away from them. Then her heart went out to them, and she asked Mrs. Trnka to sit on one side of her and Mrs. Blinka on the other. It was "love me, love my dog," and as the women of Coalton had learned to love her they loved her dog, in a very limited sense of course.

That night Mr. and Mrs. Hruby were going to a meeting in the Opera House. It was the first big war meeting to be held in Coalton, and every patriot was urged to be present. It was an invitation with a "big stick"; for it read: "If you are a patriot you will attend this meeting. By order of the National Council of Defense." The pastors of the foreign speaking churches were ordered to invite their people, and sections of the Opera House were reserved for them, so the one hundred and more Slovaks gathered at the church and

marched there, the Stars and Stripes heading the procession. Perhaps the fear of war, and not the love of it, had crept into the blood of the peace loving Slavs, for they had always been the victims of races which had boasted of their civilization, and with fire and sword enlarged their dominion.

John Hruby had reluctantly yielded himself to the war spirit, for ever since he could remember he had heard men tell of *war's horrors* as they sat around their *Palenka*, or chatted as they rested from their labor.

When the sky was red or a comet flared across the night, the old *Baba* who lived at the edge of the town under the drooping, ghastly willows, used to prophecy: "*Bude Voyna*," "there will be war."

The very word sent a shiver down his spine, for it meant invading Russians who raped the women and sacked the houses; or advancing Hungarians, who trampled the harvest under their feet; or the coming of the Prussians, the rigorous Prussians, who were the last to invade Slovakland. Then too he was trying to be a Christian, and to him that meant living "at peace with all men," loving and forgiving, and the practice of all those gentle virtues which were so strongly emphasized by his professor of theology, and which he had echoed in his sermons. He was a pacifist by nature and conviction, and he ceased to be one when the United States declared war on Germany. "If I lose my own soul," he said to himself, "I will lose it, America is worth even the damning of my soul." And he silenced his doubts and quieted his fears. He often wondered if the men who so lightly bandied that phrase about "making the world safe for democracy" knew what it meant; but to him it was a holy war on the part of the United States—a war for the whole human race, including his own people in Slovakland.



"Yes, the last and the least of the people will be free if the will of the Allies prevails," he told Sonya who shared his feelings; and probably no truer patriot attended that meeting. Sonya however was no pacifist, and the chance to strike back at the enemies of her country gave her more enthusiasm than the larger hope of a world delivered from autocracy.

John Hruby's people were more consistently opposed to war than he was. Their convictions did not yield so readily to fine phrases, and the simple "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" were graven for them by the finger of God. Yet they, too, realized in a dim sort of way, that this war was not like those other wars, of which they had been the victims. There were two appeals which their pastor used with telling effect. First, they were safely sheltered by the country to which they had come, and where they enjoyed peace and bread and meat while the rest of the world was in the throes of war and starving; and second, that this country was different from other countries, it was going to war so that at last the world might be forever delivered from the old curse of war. It was a stolid if not a stupid devotion they rendered, but when once given it was unyielding and immovable, and they marched behind the Star Spangled Banner proudly, and with a new sense of belonging to this country which, for the first time, had taken cognizance of them.

The Italians came too with their banners and their band, and the assembling crowd cheered them, as all the people of the "patches" blended for once with the good people of Coalton, who were not thinking of Coalton, or of the State, but of the country and of the world. The bands were playing and under the muscular direction of the leader the crowd sang the new and old patriotic airs,



and the people of foreign speech and blood were finding their oneness in the stirring melodies.

In one part of the Opera House sat a dejected group, the German-Americans. They sang with heavy hearts, and showed that they were conscious of the critical looks sent in their direction. They were the first to rise and the last to sit down when the Star Spangled Banner was sung though they felt more like being silent in their great grief, and had it been a time when men dared be honest, they would have wept aloud, which would have been better for them and better for the cause. Had this war been one of weapons only, they would have helped to fight and win it without much murmur or complaint. They had been immune to the *Kultur* propaganda of the Fatherland—it was above their heads, but their hearts could be touched by its songs for they belonged to the sentimental Germany of years ago, the Germany which had no foes, and but few rivals, in its rule over the emotions of music loving humanity.

None of them ever dreamed that they would have to make the cruel choice between the land of their birth and the land of their adoption. The suddenness as much as the bitterness of the struggle made it difficult for them to accomplish the inner adjustment which was so necessary to create that unity which was so dire a surprise to America's enemies and so happy a surprise to its Allies. These Germans were regarded as among Coalton's most substantial citizens. A few of the Germans of Coalton, and they were men who had come to America since the Franco-Prussian war, were caught in the meshes of the mighty and proud Fatherland, and carried their heads high; while in their hearts there was bitterness if not treason. They had influenced the life of Coalton but little, except that they consistently stood for "personal liberty," meaning a sort of license of the

stomach; the older people talked German, into which they had injected some colloquial English, and had strongly flavored the culinary calendar of the American kitchen with Sauerkraut and Limburger cheese, which under the stress of the war changed their names but not their nature.

Professor Niederstadt sat on the platform with some of the members of the Milburn College faculty. He had hesitated about attending the meeting for he felt keenly the hostile attitude of some of the townspeople; but his wife urged him to go; for the eyes of the County Chairman of the National Council of Defense were keen and his absence would be noted and misconstrued. His attitude toward the war was not different from that of a large number of cultured Germans, who had found a place in our educational institutions. He was a Saxon by birth, and had that friendly, generous temperament which differentiated the people of Dresden from the people of Berlin. He had left Germany at a time when Militarism had not as yet laid its heavy hand upon the Spirit of the Fatherland and manacled its soul and buckled the sword to its loins. Commercialism had not then been wedded to Militarism, neither had the banks and barracks embraced each other or had the king and the "Captains of Industry" kissed each other.

The professor knew of the changes taking place, for he kept in close touch with German literature which was corrupted in spots by the new spirit; but he did not realize the complete metamorphosis till he returned to the Fatherland a few years before the war. The very things which American visitors lauded, which our lecturers held up for emulation, and magazine writers exploited, marred the pleasure of the returned idealist, and he confessed that he wept when he saw the new Germany.

When he returned to the United States he felt that he had completely broken with the Old Country and he became a genuine, if somewhat unpractical American. However, the war revived much of the old feeling for the Fatherland, dead things came to life again and the tragic struggle of his soul was as genuine as it was pathetic.

The meeting was called to order by the chairman who asked the eloquent Reverend Arthur Ramsey, to invoke the Divine blessing, upon which that gentleman addressed a very lengthy prayer to the audience, in which he gave a brief history of the war, paid fitting tribute to the Allied Armies, told the purpose of the National Council of Defense, justified the war by copious quotations from the Old Testament, mentioned the German atrocities, foretold the second coming of Christ, catalogued the great resources of the United States, asked a blessing upon the speaker of the evening, and explained to the patient Lord his wonderful qualifications for the task, after which he "asked all these things" and he had really not asked anything "in the name of Him who died for love of country."

Indeed God is a forgiving God; He forgives even such prayers John Hruby was thinking as the chairman introduced the speaker "The Honorable Steve Burly, our distinguished fellow-citizen and our most prominent editor."

Steve Burly was a natural born orator as the chairman parenthetically remarked: that is, he had learned nothing since he was born and the tricks he used were natural and the outgrowth of his character.

He was a journalist and a politician, a dangerous combination, for he used his newspaper to further his political schemes and his political power to obtain public patronage for his newspaper.



Steve Burly was always fighting and the public enjoyed it, especially when he flayed the rival newspaper of which Wayne MacBlane was the editor. Let no one imagine that he was not a patriot. Steve Burly loved his country as the caveman loved his clan, despising every other caveman whose totem was not like his, or whose tattoo marks were different, while the hate in him was not modified since that day; for his ancestors were all clansmen who were loyal to the few and who hated the many.

He called himself a Christian, was a member of a Protestant church and taught a Sunday School class. In his religious thought he had traveled with the children of Israel as far as Mount Sinai, where he was caught in the fire and smoke, which he never escaped, and he thoroughly enjoyed singing the imprecatory Psalms to long meter tunes.

He was, as the chairman said, "a natural born orator," and knew that a crowd is never rational, and that the greater the mob the cheaper the message can be. He began his speech with the usual flatteries and rattling good stories and a glorification of "Old Glory." After having exhausted all the oratorical ammunition that has accumulated since our war for Independence, he came to new phrases coined in the pressure of a world agony which from his lips fell like empty echoes out of an empty cave. As sedulously as some speakers discourage applause, Steve Burly invited it by frequent pauses, as he worked himself toward the climax.

After nearly an hour of "spouting hot air" to quote Wayne MacBlane, he braced himself for his peroration. As he shot it forth he straightened himself to his full length, rising on his tiptoes, the foreshadowing pantomime of his thought.

"There are snakes in the grass," he hissed, "and



they are right here in Coalton! The Kaiser's spies, whom we have nourished in our bosom, paid agents of the German government, who are doing their devilish work in our midst! They have crept into our college and they are in our pulpits! They have corrupted the press!" And he pointed his finger toward the rear of the platform where the faculty sat, and his glance swept over groups of foreign born, and finally rested upon Wayne MacBlane who was sitting directly in front of the platform.

For a moment there was a hush, as something like fear crept over the audience. Then he warned against the propaganda in German hymn books, and declared that a law ought to be passed to prohibit preaching in foreign languages. His final shot which lifted the audience to the desired frenzy came when shaking his fist at the assembled foreigners, he shouted "Speak English or get out of this country."

The crowd hooted and yelled, and called "Good boy, Steve, give it to them." And no one seemed to remember that it was Steve Burly who had gone to picnics with the Germans and had drunk their beer with many a "*Hoch!*" who had toasted the "great German people" and had complimented them upon maintaining the German language in the parochial schools, and worked hard to nominate a German-American for the office of sheriff, so that the German-Americans of the county should have due recognition and incidentally poll a big vote for him when running for senator. Yes, it was the same Steve Burly, the same "Old Boy"; but the times had changed while he had not, and he knew the signs of the times.

The German-Americans sat as if beaten over their heads, the members of the faculty in full view of the audience tried to look unperturbed, and succeeded, all but Professor Niederstadt. He had shrunk into his

seat, and with bowed head was so engulfed in his agony that he did not hear the chairman's orders to "all rise and sing the Star Spangled Banner." He heard nothing; saw nothing; he only knew that his heart was breaking.

The people poured out of the Opera House but they were different from those who entered it. Coalton now had a hate built trench running through it, and the poisoned gas had filled its soul.

The Slovaks did not understand much of the speech and that was fortunate. "Why did he bellow so loud?" one of the men asked Sonya, and she did not reply; but a man who was sitting in the next seat and overheard the question, said: "He wants us stop talking Slovak and talk *Anglitzky*." "Is that what the war is about?" the simple Slovak asked.

John Hruby's people went home to their patch in depressed groups. They were instinctively afraid, and he tried to reassure them. After all, he told them that man was not a representative American and they had nothing to fear.

Sonya clung close to him and he felt an unusual tenderness in the pressure of her hand on his arm. When they entered the street in which the parsonage was located, weirdly illumined by the flames from the mills, she impulsively kissed him, and he put his arm protectingly around her. Annenka did not try to conceal her amazement when her mistress inquired for the baby more solicitously than ever before.

For a long time she had not been so demonstrative as she was that night and John Hruby was overjoyed. She called him her "*Yanetchek*," and began talking of Hraszova, what Mother Elzabetha might be doing, and whether Christina was not working herself to death, and wondering who was alive and who was dead.

"You are not homesick, dearest, are you?" And he kissed her again and again, feeling his answer on her lips, and seeing it in the tears which filled her eyes.

"Yes," she said, "*Yanetchku muy* I am homesick; that man made me think of Hraszova and the Jew baiting; I couldn't have believed it of America, it is worse than in Hraszova."

He called her his "foolish little foreigner." She curled herself up in his arms and looked deep into his eyes, then buried her head on his breast. "Promise me, *Yanetchku Muy*," she said, "that after this war is over we will go home to Slovakland." He did not reply, for he had been fighting the same thought.

"You know," she continued, "it will be a free Slovakland," and he nodded his head; "and there will be four of us going home. No, no," she replied to his question; "not Annenka. You and I and little Christina and—she paused, "and a little Yanek if God wills."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT: IDOLS OF CLAY

WHEN one's idols turn out to be clay, the heart turns to stone, and as John Hruby stared at the front page of the *Evening Tribune*, the huge type of the curt headlines danced before his eyes, like the caricatures in the movies, and when they finally settled into their proper sequence he cried, so loud that it startled Sonya: "It isn't true! It isn't true!" And he said it with a note of despair. They had lynched a German, a perfectly innocent German miner, because he was supposed to be Pro-German.

John Hruby crumpled the paper in his hands, then straightened it out and read it again, to make sure. His idol had turned to clay and his heart to stone. "They sang 'My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty,' while they pulled the rope!" and he laughed hysterically. "'Sweet land of liberty!' and they lynch a man, murder an innocent man in the name of Liberty!"

If Sonya had turned harlot, it would have broken his heart, and he might have lost faith in women; but America! America! He didn't want to lose faith in America! "What was there left to humanity, if America was to be defeated by her Steve Burlys?"

He went down town and realized at once that Coalton had changed. There were averted faces and reluctant greetings; for although the lynching had taken place in a neighboring mining town, the foulness of it had crept into Coalton, as it had into every town and city, making America less than it had been to every foreign born soul who trusted in her sense of fair play and who believed in her wide flung idealistic phrases.



He went to see Wayne MacBlane. Wayne was pounding his typewriter, but stopped when John Hruby entered, and savagely bit off the end of another cigar. After properly moistening it he began to smoke, waiting for his friend to open the conversation. John Hruby was walking up and down the untidy room kicking the fallen newspapers out of his way, until at last he stopped, and facing Wayne MacBlane, he said, with a short commanding jerk in his voice, "Wayne, tell me that this isn't true!" and he held the crumpled paper in his outstretched hand.

"True, why, of course it's true, true as Moses," and he adjusted his yellow sheet, prior to the attack upon it.

"But it can't be true! What will the world think about America?"

"The world, my dear fellow," Wayne MacBlane replied, this time taking his cigar out of his mouth, "the world! 'To Hell with the world,' as Steve Burly would say. What has that to do with the world?"

"Haven't we gone to war to make the world 'Safe for Democracy?'"

"We have gone to war to lick the Germans and make the world safe for hypocrisy," Wayne MacBlane replied tartly. "Yes, I know it hurts you to hear that; but it's the stark naked truth I am telling you. Most of the fellows who are yelling their heads off so loud about democracy, wouldn't recognize it in broad daylight.

"No, I don't think President Wilson is a hypocrite. I think he meant what he said; but he knows our weakness for slogans. You know that you and I and ten million fools like ourselves fall for 'Uwanta Doughnut' whether we want it or not, and we chew Malted Air-flakes because some chap, who isn't half as clever as he thinks he is, has plastered the country with a half million

dollars worth of printers' ink telling us, 'There is Ozone in Airflakes.' Now it is 'Make the world a decent place to live in' and nine out of ten of us don't believe it; yet we mouth it and shout it as if it were gospel truth.

"You are right," he replied to John Hruby's assertion that "You Americans have high ideals," "but we are deucedly poor in cashing them in. You don't remember our 'Simple Living' slogan. We went wild over it, and we stuffed out parlors full of mission furniture, and we had mission barber shops and mission saloons, until 'Simple Living' went into the discard, and Democracy and all our eloquent bunk will go the same way after the war. I told Steve Burly yesterday that he will get a darned sight more democracy out of this war, than he will know what to do with," and Wayne MacBlane began eating up space with his typewriter, as if John Hruby were over in Slovakland where he really belonged.

That unhappy man fingered the exchanges which overflowed the table and fell on to the floor like rotten fruit from a tree, and his broad horizon shrank more and more, and he went toward the door creeping more than walking; for he had suffered his great disillusionment and had suddenly grown old.

"I want to give you a piece of advice, dominie," Wayne MacBlane called after him. "Don't let this thing sour you, and keep your mouth shut. If you have any influence with Niederstadt tell him to do the same thing; for the Vigilance Corps will get you, if you don't watch out. These are deucedly unhealthy days for foreigners, especially for him. If my name were Niederstadt I would go into a cyclone cellar and stay there until this thing blows over. Lynchings like all troubles don't come singly.

"Fortunately my name is MacBlane and I am Scotch-Irish and then I like a fight. I had a letter to-day telling

me not to show my Pro-German face down town again; so I will parade Main Street when I get done here and then go to the movies."

John Hruby, however, did not keep his mouth shut as Wayne MacBlane advised him. On Monday at the ministers' meeting he talked and talked freely, for he thought he could unburden himself there. It was a solemn, sober company which gathered that Monday morning in the study of the Presbyterian minister. Most of the men had mentioned the lynching in their pulpits, but they had to be careful and they were. The war fever had crept into their blood and though some of them yielded themselves reluctantly, they prudently shelved their Gospel of Good will and Peace on Earth and though they counseled law and order they also stirred the fires to help on the war morale.

The most honest among them declared a moratorium on the Gospel for the duration of the war; so they read their Scripture lessons from the Old Testament and avoided the hymns of love and forgiveness.

Others, and they were in the majority, committed gross atrocities on the body of Jesus, by harnessing him to the war chariot and thus winning the approval of their congregations, they enjoyed the new sensation of having their sermons applauded when they said, "To Hell with the Kaiser!" And denounced the higher criticism, socialism and atheism as the products of German *Kultur*.

The Reverend Arthur Ramsey was put on the County Council of National Defense and his congregation increased in the ratio of his vehemence. It was he who declared John Hruby's remarks at the minister's meeting Pro-German and started the discussion which led to all his trouble.

"You might as well call me an atheist or an anarchist



as to call me Pro-German," he said hotly. "Evidently you don't know that I am in this country because I struggled to free my people from the Magyars and Germans. I am not Pro-anything but Pro-human."

It did seem like a boast; for after all his struggles in Slovakland had been ineffective and feeble; for he was no fighter.

"Pro-human nothing!" the Reverend Arthur Ramsey retorted with more heat than elegance, "The man who isn't for us is against us; anyway we don't want any of you foreigners to tell us how to conduct our affairs."

The shot went home. "After all," John Hruby said to himself, "I am only a foreigner," and he was silent. But the Reverend Arthur Ramsey was no more just the Reverend Arthur Ramsey. He was a member of the National Council of Defense, and as such he felt his importance, and that it was his business to go to the bottom of this thing and he did.

"I insist that our brother make a full statement of his attitude toward the war," he cried out almost hysterically.

John Hruby did not move, he felt the insult too keenly and his intention was to leave the room, but he remained as if sealed to his chair. At last he rose and in a voice full of suppressed emotions said: "I have lived among you brethren for four years or more and I have preached to my people what I thought was the Gospel. I must confess that I have not always been faithful to my message, for I have often preached more about America than the Kingdom of God, and sometimes I have declared the two identical. I love America, if not better than you can, because I have come to it out of great tribulation.

"I am willing to give my last cent that America should be victorious in this war for I hate militarism and autocracy worse I fear than Hell and the devil. I am willing to die for this country. I have offered myself to the



government and it has refused my offer because I was born in central Europe. The fact is, I should like to die for America as a sort of proof not only of my own loyalty, but of the loyalty of my people.

"I cannot, however, give to my country my soul. I can give to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, but I will not give to Cæsar that which is God's. I cannot hate, for the Good Book says: 'He that hateth his brother is a murderer,' and I believe The Book."

"The good brother doesn't know that we have to descend to the level of the beasts in this war, even as Christ descended into Hell," the Reverend Arthur Ramsey replied, meeting Scripture with Scripture.

The blood rose to John Hruby's brain at the blasphemy, and for a moment he tried to hold back the indignation which pressed for utterance. "If the Reverend Arthur Ramsey," he said, ignoring that gentleman and speaking to the other ministers, "can descend to the level of the beasts he is to be congratulated upon the achievement; I cannot. I probably am not a better or worse man than he is, but I simply cannot do that, it is morally impossible for me. And if I knew that when 'Christ descended into Hell' he became like the devil, I would renounce Jesus as I have renounced the devil." Having said this John Hruby took his hat and left the room, two of his fellow ministers going out with him and shaking his hand but saying nothing.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE: THE HATERS

THE winter of 1917-18 will long be remembered by the "oldest inhabitant," and the record of its rigor and fierce biting blasts will be recalled whenever the survivors of that period tell the story of the bitterness and rancor which filled human hearts, for they were as cruel as the weather. Those who lived through that time will speak less harshly of the Middle Ages. They will understand how, under the stress of great passion, men may torture their fellow beings to exact conformity to their own views and burn them to death if they remain obdurate.

While men may forget the coldest winter in their memory, the biting of the frost of hate will ever remain as a sad reminder of the days when many fine fruits of the human spirit were blighted, possibly to make room for better things; we can only surmise.

The winter in Coalton was as unbearable as everywhere else. Trains were blockaded by huge drifts which made their own defenses, blasting winds cut their trenches and the blizzards whirled blinding barrages into the landscape, while the hate and strife, the breaking of human relations, the base suspicions and the blasting of careers were a little worse there than elsewhere, for all of which Steve Burly was to blame.

As has been said he was a patriot, always destructive, never constructive. He hated more than he loved his kind, and was prolific in breeding patriots like himself; for it is easy to hate. His editorial columns were full of invectives and accusations against this or that man prominent in his own or neighboring communities, and the

smaller newspapers in the adjacent counties, his satellites, echoed his slanders until Coalton and the entire State were as full of hate as the air was of snowflakes.

The German Lutheran preacher had been dragged through the streets by a rope and escaped death only because his wife, after piteously pleading with his persecutors, fell into a swoon.

Professor Niederstadt was taken to the courthouse square and there before the Goddess of Justice who crowned the rotunda he was made to kiss the American flag; most of the citizens of foreign birth were brought before the Vigilance Corps which passed upon their loyalty.

John Hruby was not to be spared. Sonya had begged him to leave Coalton; but he had fled once, and ever since had regarded himself more or less as a coward, so he determined to face whatever might come.

He was not Scotch-Irish, as he told Wayne MacBlane, only a pigeon blooded Slav; yet while he had no courage to spare, he felt something within him that was like moral courage, so he determined to test himself, and he awaited developments.

It was the night before Christmas and Sonya had retired. Annenka had busied herself all day at her cleaning and she was still rubbing and scrubbing when the door bell rang and she answered it. Two men entered and inquired for the "Reverend Rooby." He thought he knew all the men active in Coalton affairs, but he did not recognize these. They evidently were not prominent in the community, but had come to summon him before the Vigilance Corps.

So now it had come to him, this thing which he had anticipated and dreaded. He was not angry, he was too keenly hurt for that, and something like a deep shame crept into his heart, like the feeling he had, when, an

innocent man, he was marched through the streets of Hraszova, the gendarmes flanking him; and these two men seemed to him just like those stupid minions of the law who took pride in being temporarily the masters of others.

He whispered to Annenka not to tell her mistress, if she should awaken and inquire for him, that he had gone with these men, but that he was called away and would return soon. It was about nine o'clock and the streets were almost impassable. A freezing cutting wind was blowing and the driven snow danced in whirls around the street lights. Annenka, with doglike instinct, scented danger and followed her master as far as possible. He was taken down Main Street, up the steps of an office building, and into an anteroom that smelled of stale tobacco. A loud murmur reached him from the other room where another victim was being morally and spiritually dissected. He could catch occasional snatches of the conversation, concerning the buying of more Liberty Bonds, or fixing the proper amount of the victim's voluntary subscription to the Red Cross Society.

John Hruby was guiltless in these and other respects, for he had subscribed and given with equal liberality and counted it neither a virtue nor a duty, but a privilege.

The victim was finally released and he was ushered into the presence of the Vigilance Corps, a self-appointed body without legal or moral authority, which met in the office of one of its members.

He was greeted politely and as he looked around he recognized a number of persons, some of whom looked shamefacedly in another direction, while others smiled at him in an encouraging way, as if to say: "Take your medicine, young man, it won't be half as bad as you think;" others merely scowled at him.

The chairman was the same person who had presided



at the meeting when Steve Burly delivered his contribution toward making "the world a decent place to live in." He assumed a judical air, looking as wise as his limitations permitted, asked John Hruby his name and stated that there was a charge against him for disloyalty. He was then asked to rise and state his case. Slowly he rose to his feet and spoke. He told them where he was born, under what circumstances, and how he had come to America; about his work in the mines, his release from that labor and of his going to college. He told of the great spiritual changes in his life and his return to Hungary, drawn there by a desire for service. He pictured the conditions over there, the pressure of the stronger race upon the weaker, of the wrong his people had suffered, and his activities in their behalf which finally led him into conflict with the authorities, and then his return to America.

His life in Coalton they knew. He had taken out his first papers and was anxiously waiting for the time when he could become a citizen. He also frankly told them his opposition to war. His people had been the victims of it for centuries, and though they owned rich lands they were impoverished because they had to pay the taxes of successive wars. He described the poverty of his people who had to labor without eating the fruit of their endeavor.

Moreover he was a minister of the Gospel of Jesus, and he believed that the teachings of Jesus were opposed to war. However, when the United States declared war on Germany he made such an adjustment as his conscience would allow, and he had urged his people to work and to suffer and if need be to die for this country, which had entered the war, not for territory or indemnities or from the lust of battle, but for the freedom of the world, which included making his country free.

He also read to his tormentors the names of the Slovak boys who had volunteered before the draft and of the others who had gone without trying to claim exemption, as well they might for they were by law alien enemies. He told of the bravery of the boys in battle who had to face their brothers at the front, and the sacrifices which his people were making that the arm of the United States might be strengthened. He spoke slowly and impressively, he tried to reflect the state of his mind and heart, and he withheld nothing.

Some of the men seemed impressed and he would soon have been dismissed if the chairman had not regarded so seriously his own importance in the case. He drew from his pocket a number of documents, adjusted his eyeglasses and began to question him.

"Did you write this letter of protest to the *Evening Tribune*?" He handed him the letter and John Hruby looked at it, then passed it back, saying: "I am proud to say that I did."

"Do you mean to say that you wrote that if this is going to be a war against the German people in America, who are not responsible for the war, you are not in favor of the war?" This the witness emphatically affirmed.

The chairman cleared his throat and looked at the members of the Vigilance Corps with an "I told you so" sort of air.

"Did you say that war is an atrocity in itself?"

"I did."

The eyeglasses of the chairman needed readjustment; when that was accomplished he read again, "Did you say in one of your sermons that lynching innocent Germans was not any better than the German atrocities in Belgium?" Again there was no denial of the charge.

The chairman's throat once more needed clearing and he cleared it impressively. "Did you say at another

time," and his voice grew still more reproachful, "that those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword?"

"I did, Mr. Chairman; but that was not original with me."

The chairman looked puzzled and wanted to know where he had heard it, and when John Hruby informed him that it was in the Bible there was a suppressed titter among the more intelligent of the men.

"You have also stated that you couldn't hate anybody and that it is wrong to hate. Don't you know that we are sending our boys over to France to send those damned Dutchmen to Hell?"

"I don't know where you are sending those Germans who are killed."

"You couldn't say: 'To Hell with the Germans?'"

"No," was the curt reply, "though they have been very cruel to my people I have neither the desire nor the power to send sixty million people to Hell."

"Well, I think we can make you say that."

"No, you cannot."

"Well, we'll fix that. Have any other members of the Vigilance Corps any questions to ask?"

If Wayne MacBlane had been there he would have said: "Then Hell broke loose."

Had John Hruby not been sent over here by the German Government as a spy?

Had he not helped to colonize these foreigners so that they might overthrow the United States Government?"

Perhaps he did not have a sufficient sense of humor to laugh at these questions, yet it did not seem possible to him that sane men could ask them; but question followed question as dart follows dart, and each of them had a poisoned tip.

Outwardly he was still calm, but inwardly he felt the blood beating against his temples and he pressed back

the swollen veins; for he wanted to remain master of himself. One question, however, robbed him of his poise.

"Did you not refuse at one of the ministers' meetings to declare your loyalty to the United States?"

It wasn't the lie, vile though it was, which loosed his suppressed emotions. But that the lie came from such a quarter! That seemed to break his heart, and a great cry of anguish broke from his lips.

"It is a lie! It is a lie!" he cried. "It is a lie! It is a damnable lie!" Men jumped to their feet and surrounded him. He did not know whether they meant to do him violence or not, and he did not care; they had already killed something within him, something more precious than life—the only thing worth while, his faith in America, his faith in good men, and now they might have his life! He was not thinking of Sónya or of little Christina or of their child yet unborn; but of his faith in America, shattered and almost killed by these creatures.

If they had killed him, it would have been called murder; perhaps a patriotic jury would have called it justifiable murder; but for this thing they had done to him there was no name; for language never believed it would have to name it.

As his agonizing cries, mingled with the excited voices of the men, filled the room, the door was burst open and Sonya dashed in among them like a fury. "What are you doing to him, you wretches? Let him go!" she shrieked, as she put her arms around him.

"All of you are not worth his little finger!" she said in her broken English. "A thousand of you are not worth one of him."

"Don't be excited, Mrs. Rooby," said the chairman. "We are all his friends."



"If you are his friends, then may Heaven protect him from his enemies!" retorted Sonya.

"Yanek, my Yanek! Let us go home, away from these bad men!" And she led him out, and all through the cold silent streets he told her between his sobs that there is a better America, only they had not found it, and begged her not to lose faith in America.

"Don't speak to me of America or the Americans! I hate them all! Why did you tell me that here all is right and just, that every man may think for himself and not be molested? Take me home to Hungary, it may be bad there, but it is worse here!"

Yanek tried to soothe her and so the terrible strain was partially lifted from his own over-wrought feelings.

When they reached home Annenka received them with an unwonted gentleness. It was long before they could think of slumber, but in trying to speak words of comfort to one another they at last fell asleep.

## CHAPTER THIRTY: SONYA GOES HOME

**H**E did not think that he had slept at all when Sonya's groaning reached him in the peaceful valley of forgetfulness, and when he looked into her eyes he read in them both alarm and joy, but the agony which crept into her face hid the joy; for the baby to whose arrival they had looked forward so happily, was coming before its time. The exposure and excitement of the night were too much for Sonya in her condition, and she needs must suffer for the deeds of wicked men.

Annenka was awakened and the doctor summoned. Then began that awful time when the hours seemed to lengthen into years; for the spasms of pain did not reach their climax until late that night.

It is at such a time as this that true men feel ashamed that the curse of bearing children in pain falls so completely upon the woman, and they strive in vain to balance the account by their mental anguish, knowing all the time that they are the debtors. Most men pray then even if they have never prayed before, and John Hruby clutched the hem of God's garment and reached despairingly toward the great Father Heart.

God seemed to be striving and struggling, as if half impotent to amend man's cruel bungling; yet he believed that God was hearing him and that he was not only pitying him in his misery but pitying Himself for having left His last and best creation, made in His own image, so unlike Himself; so powerful and yet so weak; so kind and yet so cruel.

John Hruby looked out into the glare of the Sun, re-

flected upon the fine blown snow, all its sharp ridges accentuated, and its hollows deepened. Men were passing and he wanted to call out to them to come in and see how much they had added to a woman's pain, and what their malignant hate had brought into the sublimest moment of a woman's love.

"Good God! Save me from hating them!" His heart cried out. "There is hate enough and to spare!" He tried to think kindly of them and smile upon them as they passed; but they were intent upon keeping out the cruel cold, and had they seen him they might have turned away from him as they had done again and again during the last few months. To them he was an outcast, befouled by their lies, declared disloyal by men who were disloyal to the holiest of all earthly things—personality, and who had tried to drag a human soul to their foul level.

He was just himself now, John Hruby; an alien whom they had torn from the womb of the country in which he was having his rebirth, even as the doctor was struggling to bring that holy thing out of the womb of its mother. They had succeeded, and he still felt the hurt of it; the strain, the bruises, the grip of their forceps, and the slimy touch of their fingers.

Yet he knew he must not hate them; for the striving God within was telling him that they were blinded by their hate, and he was weeping more for them than for himself. They thought they were dragging him through the muck of their low passion; but instead, they had taken him through the fire, the purifying fire of suffering "for righteousness' sake." So much dross had been burned away, and it dropped from his soul leaving it the purer, while they were defiled; just as the men in the mills while they purified the ore and toughened it into steel, came away besmirched and weakened by their toil.

Sonya called to him and he went to her bedside. He wished he might lift himself and soar to her, so that the floor might not creak, or cause the bed upon which she lay, to shake. She was too weak to speak. The pain had been assuaged for a time but had left her exhausted, and the doctor cautioned silence. Her husband grasped her hot limp hand and held it, and tried to let his love flow into her heart and his strength into her weakened body. "Oh God!" he cried, "Help her! Bless her! Heal her!"

He saw the struggle in her eyes and on her pain drawn face. She tried to speak to him, her cheeks flushed suddenly as she felt the agony surging back, and she knew that she could not survive. "You will take the children home to Hraszova—to Christina," she whispered breathlessly. "Tell her to forgive me. My little Christina!" and she pointed toward the door, and he knew that she wanted her child. Annenka brought the poor frightened little girl, who began to cry; for they were all weeping. They soon led her out, for her mother scarcely had strength to kiss her.

The day and evening passed in agonizing alternations of fear and hope, while Sonya's strength ebbed slowly away. About midnight the pain racked her for the last ordeal and she cried: "Don't let them come! They are coming for me! The Americans are coming to take me away! Don't let them come to my burial." There was a momentary lull in her pain. "I want nothing from them—nothing!" she cried and awaited the inevitable.

A poor tiny being born out of due time came into the world with no assurance of a lease upon life; and in the white, ghastly face of its mother there was not even a welcoming smile. John Hruby never really knew how long she hovered between life and death, for time was blotted out and he lived only by torturing heart beats.



Once the doctor gave him a straw of hope for his despairing soul to clutch. "God! God! Let her live! Let her live! She must get well!" he pleaded.

He knelt beside her and told her that as soon as she was able to travel he would take her back to Hraszova, and knowing that it gave him pleasure, she smiled and tried to listen to his plans. They brought the little baby, and she summoned all her fast failing energies and called it her "little *Yanetchek*"; but it looked as old and wrinkled as if it had already lived a hundred years, or as if it had drunk deep from the cup of woe which humanity was filling to the brim.

It had not strength enough to cry, and Annenka took it again, and there were tears in her eyes, and in her parchment like cheeks there came a glow. She was a mother, and she pressed it close to her breasts and prayed for a miracle to fill them that she might nourish the little creature. John Hruby's spirits rose and fell like a boat on a stormy sea. Now Sonya had almost gone from him; then she came back again, as if the Captain were taking this ship to its harbor, not sure that he would make the sheltering breakwater. Sonya knew that she was going home, but that her harbor was on the other, safer side. She talked about Hraszova, and the small happy incidents which loom so large at such a time—faded pictures becoming stronger and brighter the further they receded; for the dying become farsighted.

"You will plant tulips," she whispered and spoke of Mother Elizabetha who always planted "*tulipany*" in the autumn, and brought to the Pan's table the first glorious cups out of which spring drank the health of the year. "And rosemary." She drew in her breath as if the pungent herb were near her. Then she took her husband's hands with a strength which deceived him, and kissed them. "Rosemary," she whispered again and

again, as he held her close. "What a beautiful wreath you have on your head, my darling," she said as her mind wandered.

"*Vyenetz*," she whispered, "*Vyenetz*, but there are no tulips in your *Vyenetz*, only yellow grain and wild asters, and I want tulips and rosemary.

"Let us go into the garden, Yanek," and her face flushed from the secret joy of it. "Let us gather tulips and smell the rosemary."

Then her hands began moving over the coverlid as if she were searching for something.

"They are gone! Only wild asters and yellow grain, and it is cold, cold!"

Her body shook in the chill of death, and though her husband piteously begged her to live for him, her spirit took its flight, all was still and—Sonya had gone to the eternal spring, where the angels drink out of tulips and wind sweet wreaths of rosemary; but she left behind her a desolate winter, and a more desolate heart.

"*Hayishku, Hayishku!*" Annenka had walked up and down all night singing to the baby every lullaby she knew, huddling it and cuddling it; so for a long time as she walked up and down, still crooning and still singing, she did not know that the baby was dead in her arms. When she discovered it she wept so violently that the watchers, sitting below at Sonya's casket, ran upstairs to see what had happened to Annenka. Had she borne the child herself, she could not have been more reluctant to give it up. She dressed it in all the hand stitched finery which awaited it, and they put it into the arms of Sonya, from whose womb it had been forced to come too soon.

The news of her death and her baby's swept through town, and the telephone bell rang often, inquiries were made and help proffered. Annenka, who guarded the

'phone, answered every one with a sharp and decisive no, and told all who asked, that the funeral would be private.

As she guarded the telephone, so she guarded the door, and when the florists came with wreaths and flowers from American donors she refused to accept them; as she knew she was doing what her mistress would wish.

Wayne MacBlane and Professor Niederstadt were constantly with John Hruby and they were wise enough not to say anything at a time when mere words are worse than powerless, and the best of them meaningless.

They and Mrs. Niederstadt were the only Americans who were at the funeral service, which was held in the little church.

The Slovak women came in their picturesque garb, for Annenka had told them that their *Panyí Fararka* would like the tulips on their dresses better than any flowers which they might buy; so they wore whatever bit of Old World finery they had brought to America. There were many incongruous combinations of Slovak neckerchiefs and shirtwaists which originated on Broadway; short, broad flowing skirts and high heeled American shoes; the men took out of the depths of their trunks their sheepskin coats, which they wore over their creased trousers, and stiff collars and American shirts. One young man who had saved his little round rimmed hat, wore it with its big peacock feather, and a sprig of dried rosemary clinging to the colored cord. When John Hruby saw that, Sonya's last words came so vividly to him, that all his self-control was broken down and he sobbed like a child.

The stolid Slovak men and women wept all through the service, and while they wept for Sonya and the baby, they were weeping also for that which was perishing in their own hearts, which was conceived in a holy passion,

of which they became conscious through making common cause with those among whom they had lived heretofore as strangers. Yet these, among whom they lived and labored, had bruised and hurt them by their suspicions and the demand that this something be born before its time.

"It is the same as in Hungary," they said as they passed through Main Street toward the cemetery, carrying the bodies of the mother and child, the unfeeling crowd staring at them half menacingly because they wore "outlandish clothes" in honor of their *Panenka Fararka* who loved tulips and rosemary, and had not been weaned from the soil on which they grew more beautifully and fragrantly than elsewhere.

Into the frozen ground they laid Sonya's body, and as the heavy unyielding clods fell upon the casket, they also fell upon that which had died in the simple hearts of the Slovaks, who buried something besides the body of their *Panenka Fararka* and her child, born out of due time.

Steve Burly had an editorial the next day, taking the funeral as an illustration of "the un-Americanized foreigners, who flaunted their Old World fineries before the faces of loyal Americans and carried their dead to the cemetery, instead of having them conveyed in an American hearse."

He demanded immediate Americanization, "with a club if necessary," and all the petty newspapers of the State, taking their cue from Steve Burly, as usual, enlarged upon the subject, and warned America against the stranger within her gates.



## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE: THE ARMISTICE

GRIEF almost ceased to be personal in such a year as the one in which Sonya went home. Those who were sorest stricken had the comfort that theirs was the common lot; for sorrow like the night had flung her dark mantle over the whole earth, and in many portions of it there had been no hopeful sunrise for four long, bitter years.

It was his peoples' unrelieved agony which kept John Hruby at his post, though Coalton had become unbearable to him. He avoided Main Street as if its air were pestilential, and Annenka grew more and more domineering as he put upon her the small, down town duties which he had usually performed so gladly, because they brought him in contact with the Americans. What he lacked in capacity to hate she made up in double measure, and when she passed Steve Burly's newspaper office she spat in that direction; for she hated him more than she hated her arch enemies, dirt and the devil.

No news from the homeland had crossed the trenches, and the Slovak "patch" added daily its quota of service stars, whose blue brightened into gold with every setting of the sun. The women dropped their shawled heads into their toil worn hands, their eyes heavy from tears, and their pastor spoke words of comfort to them like one who himself was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

The men who remained in mill and mine, grumbled often and went reluctantly to their task, for the feeling against them increased, and he had to cheer their hearts and steady their faltering hands.

"War makes people blind," he said to them, "but some day the Americans will recognize the part you have played in making this nation move as with one will, and strike as with one arm."

He dared not say anything openly in praise of his people, for Steve Burly had struck the nativistic note so effectively that everything was treason which did not increase suspicion against the foreign born, and did not add fuel to the flame of hate.

In Coalton and a thousand other places like it, the people did not wish to be reminded of the loyalty and bravery of the aliens; though each day as they read with solemn fear the casualty lists, they stumbled over unpronounceable names.

Wayne MacBlane, one of the few Americans who had remained true to the type, and who had preached unfalteringly the gospel of fair play, printed a composite picture of four of Coalton's soldiers who had died at the front after having been cited for special bravery, and he named the immortal hero, "*Giovanni Mac Brown-sky*."

John Hruby carried more than his share of anxiety in those dark days of the spring of 1918, when the German arms prevailed against the Allies, and the English army fought with its back against the wall. To him their defeat meant not only the defeat of the Allies, but that the condition of his people in Hungary would become unbearable, and their enslavement complete.

There was a rift in the clouds, however, and it came when Professor Masaryk visited this country and stopped at Coalton to address the Czecho-Slovaks, who acclaimed him: "President of the New Republic." Even Steve Burly, when he looked into that strong and noble face, had to admit that "there are some foreigners who are as good as the Americans" and that the Czecho-Slovaks

were doing their share in making the arms of the Allies prevail.

Of all the days through which this generation has lived, one of them will ever remain the day of days, the one whose joy will not abate and whose glory will never fade.

The tension broke when the rumor of the signing of the armistice reached this country. The delirium of joy was suspended when the rumor proved premature, and broke out anew in the early hours of the eleventh day of November.

No dawn was ever greeted as was this one, which was to herald a new era in the history of mankind. On wireless waves the angel's message was carried, as it was two thousand years ago; but the slumbering shepherds had no sirens or church bells with which to waken the rest of mankind to their unutterable joy.

Annenka was wakened by the tumult of the mills which, with their giant lungs, blew the glad alarm; the mines answered in short, sharp, asthmatic blasts; the electric light plant and the waterworks used their power to announce the new illuminant and the new refreshment for humanity, and grim Annenka, hastily clad, ran out and gave the church bells their first chance under the new order to glorify God in the highest.

When the other bells faltered and the whistles grew faint she kept on tugging the bell rope like one possessed by madness; and when duty finally demanded that she return to her kitchen, she ran out again after she had made the coffee, to let Coalton know how the Slovaks felt about it; and, for once, she was not angry when on returning she found that the milk had boiled over and dimmed the luster of her highly polished stove.

Frantic noises reached the little parsonage from Main Street, the band was playing one mad tune after another,



people were moving about heedless of their direction, and embraced one another for the sheer mad joy of it.

John Hruby had gone to Wayne MacBlane's office, and there that vehicle of human joys and sorrows sat unperturbed at his typewriter filling the yellow sheets as if he were a copperwire chosen to convey the mighty energy because least influenced by it.

The mill men had left their boiling, bubbling furnaces. What did they care for ingots and tubes and cauldrons when the sword of the mighty was broken, and the War King had been hurled from his throne?

The miners crawled out of the womb of the earth and the next shift did not return to help change the night into day, now that the new day had dawned; the clerks and stenographers and all the little cogs in the man made machine stopped, feeling too ennobled to do their measuring and weighing of small wares and writing letters for "Yours Truly."

School-teachers and their pupils forsook their geographies and histories now that they were made obsolete by the power of arms; every one was too drunk from joy to labor—every one but the newspaper men, who had to sit at their typewriters, like Wayne MacBlane, as if this were only another fleeting day with its empty columns of white paper hungry to be filled.

He had already interviewed many of the prominent men of Greater Coalton as to what they thought of the armistice and its effect upon the world, especially on Greater Coalton; for Coalton was slipping back out of the embrasure of the world to the consideration of its own commercial future. He knew well enough that it did not matter what the great men of Greater Coalton thought about the armistice; but it was a feature, and that evening when the hysteria of joy had spent itself,



the bankers and merchants and ministers would congratulate themselves upon seeing their names in the paper under a few inches of the expression of their vision and wisdom. Wayne MacBlane chuckled as he transcribed these "gems of thought," and he read some of them to his welcome visitor.

The president of the Iron and Fuel Company said: "Now that the world has been made 'a decent place to live in,' it means a better relationship between Capital and Labor."

"I bet you a box of cigars," Wayne MacBlane said, as he threw down the sheet of paper, "that while he was saying that he was planning how to reduce wages and break up the Unions."

The banker thought "it meant greater thrift and therefore more prosperity."

"The Reverend Arthur Ramsey declaimed to me in his best pulpit style that 'it was a victory of truth over error and of the principles of the Gospel of Jesus over materialism and that we must now guard against an easy peace for the Huns.'"

"Now I shall interview you. What do you say, Reverend Rooby?" and he turned to his typewriter ready for the answer.

In his slow measured way John Hrubby replied: "I thank God for the armistice, for now we shall again be able to tell the truth."

Wayne MacBlane whirled round in his swivel chair and replied, "Not yet, my dear fellow, not for a long time yet. You forget that there are the Bolsheviki." He was right. One dark cloud had passed but another was on the horizon ready to obscure vision and seal the lips of truth.

Steve Burly's leading editorial that day had the new venom. He declared Wayne MacBlane a Bolshevik. The

armistice came too soon to spend all the stock of hate, and now "Pro-German," which was the pet title applied to every one who differed from him, had a worthy successor: "Bolshevik." A new label with which to libel his enemies.

The Reverend Arthur Ramsey and all the other preachers who had supplied verbal ammunition to help win the war, and who talked about the new world to be born out of the agony of mankind, woke to the fact that there was no new world, no joyous, new born world, but an older, more wrinkled, disillusioned planet, and that they had to go back to their former and often futile endeavor to preach the "Kingdom of God and His righteousness." However, they could still use their old invectives and hurl them against the Bolsheviki who, in their imagination, lurked around every corner and needed to be dealt with summarily.

If the lot of John Hruby's people was hard during the war, it grew harder after the victory was assured; for the supposed menace to America increased in ratio to his people's ignorance of English; and the patriotic knitters and four minute men and vigilant saviors of their country threw themselves with vigor upon the enemy within their gates who were ignorant of the Constitution, did not know the names of their congressman and had never heard of the Monroe Doctrine.

"Teach the foreigner English and you cure the evil of Bolshevism!" was Steve Burly's prescription. "If he can't learn the American language send him back." Every foreigner was an embryo Bolshevik, and vision became more obscured and truth was still hidden in propaganda; while the foreigner, who was once declared unfit for America because he lowered the standard of living, was now declared undesirable because he joined the Unions and claimed that the Slovak "patch" was a part

of the world and should also be made "a decent place to live in."

"America *ne Dobra*" (not good), the Slovaks complained, and it took all John Hruby's faith to make them believe that America is good, even if it is not always "fine," and that sanity would return with the final declaration of peace. His own faith had wavered, but he had not lost it; he still believed that America would be the salvation of the world, though he doubted its immediateness and his own share in the deliverance.

Now that the grief of the universe was slowly being assuaged, he came back more often to his own sorrow and his mind leaped daily over the still closed barriers to Hraszova, to his mother and father, and often, too often, to Christina.

He knew that, though the patch of earth which he loved was a part of the New Republic, he could not go back there to live; he was too much an American. He realized that, soon after he returned there with his diploma, hoping to save Hraszova by his preaching. He was a changed man, "for better, for worse" an American, and the seven years of living here sharing in the national life at its intensest point during the war had made that change permanent and complete in spite of the persecutions to which he had been subjected.

There was something in his heart which he did not want to admit to himself for he was ashamed of it for Sonya's sake. The thought of it blurred the memory of the few happy years he had lived with her. He still loved Christina, and while it was a love grown purer, it was the more insistent. Perhaps he was but lonely he said to himself when the spell of Christina was upon him; perhaps it was the almost intolerable dominance of Annenka, who had not sweetened with the year of her restored authority over his household, or it may have



been the thought of little Christina growing up without a mother; perhaps, and then his heart would not follow his mind, and he covered his eyes as if ashamed to see himself a man who yearned for a mate.

He had written a letter to mail to Christina as soon as the broken world was knitted together again. He had rewritten it every day and he was only waiting for Hraszova to come within the zone of the restored world that he might send it.

One afternoon his friends Wayne MacBlane and Professor Niederstadt were in his study. They were trying as usual to settle the affairs of the unsettled universe and talked about the League of Nations and disrupted Europe's need of it; of the peace terms, which they agreed were just but not generous, or calculated to decrease the world's stock of hate, and, last but not least, of the Bolsheviki, and of what the new experiment would mean to the world.

Wayne MacBlane was a radical by nature and to him every change meant progress. Like many young Americans he despaired of his country. "America has made no progress in democracy," he declared, "since the war of the revolution. Europe had its 1848 while the United States had its '49, when the chance to chase for gold was still equivalent to freedom, although even that chance had been reduced to a minimum."

Professor Niederstadt was anti-Bolshevik, and though he sympathized with the revolutionists, their program was to him impossible and the means of carrying it out immoral.

John Hruby, who knew the Slavs, believed in the religiousness of the Russian spirit and rested his faith upon the peasants of Russia who are natively Christian and might evolve a new world order.

It was a long debate and they were happy because they



could talk to each other freely and unburden their hearts, and the circle, in which one could do that, had not widened perceptibly.

In the midst of their discussion Annenka appeared with a very thick letter, and her hand trembled as she held it, for she had seen by the foreign stamps that it was from the Old Country, and to her it was like the olive branch to Noah, a sign that the flood had abated and that there was dry land.

To John Hruby it meant more, for he recognized the writing, and he tore open the envelope in haste, excusing himself while he read. Page after page fell from his hand, his eyes grew moist and once he rested his head on the table and sighed deeply. The two friends made ready to go that he might be alone with his grief or joy or whatever it was which had broken through the years of silence. He asked them if they would object to his reading the letter to them, and they were as eager as he had been to hear the first tidings from the unlocked doors of central Europe. Professor Niederstadt picked up the fallen sheets and put them into their proper order, Wayne MacBlane lighted another cigar, and then John Hruby translated to them Christina's letter.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO: SANCTUS SPIRITUS AND COMPANY

“ Hraszova, Hungary,

“ December 24, 1918.

“ **M**Y dearly beloved Sister and Brother,  
“ I am writing this letter not knowing when or where or how it will reach you, for while the war is over, there is as yet no order, and I shall send it by Attorney Finor, who goes to Prague as a member of the new government. From there may it find its way to you as God wills.

“ I have been giving daily thanks that you are both safely away in America where the world's sorrow may have reached you as the waves of the stormy ocean sweep against the safe shore. We have been in the midst of the tempest and it is as if by a miracle that we survived it, although there are many who have gone down whom we have envied, as they went to their peaceful home. Death has no terror for any one, but for the children who do not know that the day's life, as God had ordered it, was meant to be full of joy and not filled with an agony which would break their little hearts if they knew the difference.

“ Even, as it is, the children play, but like old men and women, for they have no such energy as we had when we were young. Many of them do not know that they are entitled to two parents, and they believe, as never before, that the stork brought them and that he brought them by the dozen to orphan asylums or to lone women like myself; for I am now the mother of eighteen little

ones whose fathers were killed or have been lost in the great desert which the war has made out of our beautiful and verdant world, and whose mothers have perished of hunger, or the anguish of childbirth, in so uselessly renewing life.

"Dearest Sonya, what a happy mother you must be, for you surely have children, and how thankful you ought to be that your children were born in America. Our eyes have been turned toward your happy country all these years and we have expected from there our deliverance from the war and from the famine which is now worse than the war.

"How proud you must be of your President whose name is upon our lips daily, as we pray to God to bring this unhappy time to an end. Do you remember, Yanek, how you talked about America when you were here? It seems now as if it were a hundred years ago. I scarcely believed you when you said its people were so generous and so unselfishly kind, but now that we have heard the voice of America speaking to us, I know that you were right in saying that it is the Promised Land, and that the Kingdom of God came there before it reached the rest of the world.

"Poor *Babushka* does not have to wait, she has gone to her reward and sees her dear *Jeshzitshek* face to face. She shared all she had with the poor, and she had a painless death! She just faded away from weakness and she had no complaint upon her lips, and in her eyes was a heavenly light.

The blessed old *Starychek* died in prison. He preached against the war and they put him away. However, they did not silence him. He converted his jailer and the old soldiers who guarded the prison, and 'though he is dead he yet speaketh.'

"Thank God, Dr. Makutchky is still alive, though how

he survived I do not know, for he worked day and night with a self, forgetful devotion, for which God will reward him. He did the work of ten men, having charge of the hospital which was made out of the brewery. I wish dear old Moritz Redlich might have been alive to see that place put to such good use.

"I gave our house for the orphanage and I am living with Mother Elzabetha. I should have told you about your parents the first thing, dear brother, but my heart is so full and I am writing hardly knowing where to begin. Your dear mother is well and a great comfort to me. We are sleeping together on the bake oven and we often talk about you. She says, 'My Yanek would not complain now of too many feather beds,' for she gave them all to the hospital, and the dear soul misses nothing so much as her feather beds. Now, dear Yanek, I have some very sad news to tell you and what could you expect but sad news? Your dear father died an honorable death. He volunteered for the transportation corps and was driving our horses when a piece of shrapnel struck him, killing him instantly. He was well prepared for death for he trusted in the mercy of God, and is there anything else in which we can put our trust?

"Your sister Katchka's husband is among the missing, but we hope he may return from Russia where so many of our boys are languishing. I ought to stop this letter right here, for all the news I have to tell you is bad news. There is not a house in Hraszova in which there is anything but sorrow, and not one of us has been spared from war, famine and pestilence.

"However, we had worse things than these to contend with. In the beginning of the war, as you know, dear Sonya, the officials flattered us and told our boys that the king relied upon their bravery to save his kingdom, and there were speeches and wreaths of flowers and the men



received food when we had little or none. But when our soldiers came back from Serbia and were sent to the Russian front, they heard from their Czech brothers that they were fighting to make the Germans and the Magyars masters of the whole world, and that they were shedding the blood of their own kin; so they laid down their arms and were taken prisoners, though many of them died heroically in battle.

"Afterwards when the news came back to Hraszova we were met everywhere with derision and were called traitors and the food rations became smaller and our cellars and granaries were raided and all the food taken to Budapest, so that we were in danger of starvation.

"I went to the capital and made a remonstrance. I was a lone weak woman, but God gave me strength and the stony heart of Pharaoh was softened, and I was appointed local food commissioner. I felt like Joseph in Egypt, and God gave me the grace to save my people. You ought to be on your knees daily, dear brother and sister, that you are living in a country where you are not persecuted because of your race or speech. Sometimes, when I was very weak, I envied you. May God forgive me! It was not often, for I rejoice that you are safe in each other's love and safe in that blessed America.

"Of course you know that we no longer belong to Hungary and that we are rid of our masters. I have no *Shadenfreude* as the Germans call it, but it was like the day of judgment when the Czechs came into Hraszova and the Magyar officials were sent beyond the new border. Many of them denied their nationality and begged to remain, for the conditions there are worse than here. At least we have some order, over there they have anarchy, and no one feels safe, even of his life.

"I went out to the cemetery and told my dear school-

master all about it, though I think he knows. I wonder if our beloved dead can be happy over anything?

"Dr. Makutchky is not elated over the situation. He thinks we have only changed masters, although thus far the Czechs have been kind to us. They have nothing to give us but good will, but even that is a godsend at a time like this.

"However, the joy of being a free people was short lived, for the famine is worse than ever, and I have a hard time making the little we have go all around. Human nature is a frail and sometimes a brutal thing and honest people have turned into thieves, and there are more murders in a month than we knew of in our whole lives. No one knows the truth, no one trusts another, and I have been called cruel. Twice I have been stoned because I tried to be fair and deal out to all alike the little we have. It seems strange that those who were poor and whom we called wicked have been the most honest, and the good people have been the worst. I think I can understand it, they were good because they were prosperous. Don't think that I have lost my faith in goodness and truth and love, though there is but little left of all the good things for which the human race has striven so long; yet I have been richly blessed and I must not complain.

"I am waiting for news from you every day. How long it seems, dearest Sonya, since you left us, and Yanek, too, we miss; but you will surely come to us when the world has stopped reeling and we know the straight road again.

"Tell me all about your dear selves and about the children. How old are they and what have you named them? Mother Elizabetha says you must have two children, a boy and a girl. We believe what we want, do we not? How happy she would be to see you and your

children. She wants me to tell you that she has not ceased praying for you and is daily sending her good wishes across the sea. The dear, sweet soul! She is a saint, and God will reward her.

"I ought to close this letter, but I know there are more things you want to know about us, just as we want to know about every detail of your lives.

Father Anton Kalman passed away only a few months ago. He came down from Boor and took charge of his own beloved flock when Father Baczko went to the war. He came back to Hraszova this year, but the people drove him out, they hated him so and spared his life only because Father Kalman protected him and sent him away in the night.

"Helena, his niece, who kept house for him in Boor, came back with him and she has been a very angel to the people. All Father Kalman's goodness seems to have come to her, and while she can not be a Father of The Church she has been both father and mother to the people. I don't know what I should have done without her. She is a very beautiful woman, and people kiss her hand when they pass her as if she were really a priest or a holy nun.

"Sophie Redlich inquired after you both whenever she thought we might have heard about you or from you. She has completely recovered and bears her burden and the burdens of others as her father used to. Her stepmother is living and is a great cross to her. She is dissolute and has taken to drinking, and is the most pitiable sight I have ever seen. It takes grace to bear with her and Sophie has that grace, though she is not a Christian.

"She has worked day and night, for she has charge of the Jewish hospital, and besides that she has had to protect the Jews as best she could, for they have suffered more than we. God must have some special mission for them for they are tried as if by fire, and the fire burns



hottest for them in this terrible time when hatreds are ten times as strong as in times of peace. We are often together, Helena, Sophie and I, and we talk about the days when our dear old men lived together like brothers.

"The past seems to unite us three old maids. The people laugh when they see us together, and now they call us Sanctus Spiritus and Company, and we hope we may be worthy of that holy name.

"This is a very long letter, my dear ones, and I must stop for it is time for me to put my little orphans to bed. Let me hear from you as often as possible. Do not think I am unhappy in my own life. My work is very absorbing, and I thank God I can be of use in the world.

"God bless you both, is my prayer.

"Lovingly your sister,  
"CHRISTINA."

John Hruby had to stop many times, for he was overcome by his emotions, and his friends begged him not to go on if it gave him pain, but he read nearly to the end, omitting only the very last of the letter.

When he finished reading he looked up with a happy smile and said: "Thank God! Sanctus Spiritus and Company have risen from the dead."

Wayne MacBlane wanted to know just who or what Sanctus Spiritus and Company were, and Professor Niederstadt looked at him eager for an explanation. Then he told them the story of the three old men. Of Father Anton Kalman, Pan Yan Szenitzky and Moritz Redlich, who were the survivors of the good old time when men of different races and faiths could live together like brothers, and how one by one they went down under the new nationalism, which claimed not only them as a sacrifice, but drew nearly ten million more men into the abyss, and almost wrecked the world.



They listened to the long, strange story and, as they separated, they knew that the New World, for which mankind was waiting, could not come, unless everywhere men of good will walked with Sanctus Spiritus and Company.

**THE END**



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